Christian Courier

A REFORMED WEEKLY

JUNE 30, 1995/No. 2450

CRC Synod settles women in office issue for next five years

'Unity decision' allows classes to decide what's best for them

Bert Witvoet

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — In a clear majority vote, Synod 1995 opted for middle ground on the issue of women in ecclesiastical office.

In contrast to Synod 1994's decision that Scripture's "clear" teaching prohibits women from holding offices of minister, evangelist and elder, this synod said that it recognizes that on this issue "there are two different perspectives and convictions, both of which honor the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God."

Synod 1995 decided that instead of changing Church Order Article 3-a by deleting the word *male* as criterion for holding the office of elder, minister and evangelist, it would allow classis, "in response to local needs and circumstances," to declare the word *male* to be inoperative. Such a regional decision would permit churches in that classis to install women in the three offices if they so desire.

However, should a classis decide not to declare the word *male* to be inoperative, a local congregation may still install female elders, but not female pastors or evangelists.

Since these decisions of synod do not constitute a change in the Church Order, but will be entered into the Church Order Supplement , they do not need to be ratified by a subsequent synod.

BERT WITVOET

Not jumping for joy, but grateful.

Instead, synod declared this arrangement in effect until the year 2,000, at which time it will be reviewed. In the meantime, however, women pastors and elders may not be synod delegates or synodical deputies.

Not an issue of salvation

A minority report, which was not considered by synod, recommended to stay with the decision of Synod 1994 not to open three offices of the church to women. Nevertheless, it agreed with the majority report that this issue is not "one of salvation and that even in our differences, we remain sisters and brothers in Christ."

In fact, the minority report said that Synod 1994, "in stating that Scripture was clear, failed to recognize that both sides had faithfully sought to interpret Scripture on this issue."

Members of the advisory committee commented on the

See **CLASSES** *page 2...*

B.C. orders schools to stop teaching creation

James Kwantes

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. — Darwin's in and Adam and Eve are out in Abbotsford, B.C., where high school students will no longer be taught creation in their Grade 11 biology classes. The Abbotsford school board has decided to comply with B.C. Minister of Education Art Charbonneau's order to stop the teaching of divine creation in Abbotsford public schools.

But many in the community are angry at the provincial government's involvement, not at the school board policy. Paul Chamberlain, a school board trustee, says the board has received several complaints from parents who resent the NDP government's edict.

"There has been quite an outcry from people who are upset with the ministry barging in and imposing this viewpoint on our community," said Chamberlain.

The decision to comply with the order comes after weeks of

COURTESY PAUL CHAMBERLAIN

Paul Chamberlain

argument between the provincial government and the school board. The debate was fuelled by provincial and national media coverage, and Vancouver media editorials portraying Abbotsford residents as cave-dwellers.

It's the second time in a few months that the media spotlight has shone on the "Bible belt" community of Abbotsford. Earlier this year, the library board voted to ban *Xtra West!* from the shelves. The gay magazine features explicit personal ads that many parents and community groups found objectionable. The board later permitted the magazine in the library but ordered it placed high on the shelves.

'Public school no place for religion'

The debate over teaching creation in schools first started when Scott Goodman, a member of a group called the Organization of Advocates in Support of Integrity in Science Education (OASIS), requested the school board alter its policy that creation be included in the Biology 11 curriculum. He argued that religion had no place in a public school classroom. However, the board voted to retain the policy.

Then the Abbotsford Teachers Association asked the board to reject the policy. The group said that many biology teachers in the district simply do not teach their students about evolution to avoid teaching "creationism" in their classroom. When the board refused to budge, the teachers went to the Ministry of Education.

Eventually, Charbonneau sent the Abbotsford school board a letter instructing them to drop creationism from the biology curriculum. He cited the B.C. School Act, which states that public schools cannot teach any religious creed. Charbonneau said that while creationism could be taught in a comparative religion class, it should not be taught in a science class. He set a deadline of June 16 for the school board to comply.

Initially, school board chairperson John Sutherland said the board would refuse to drop creationism from the biology curriculum. But it has now

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Delegates' thoughts on 'women in office' debate

Bert Witvoet

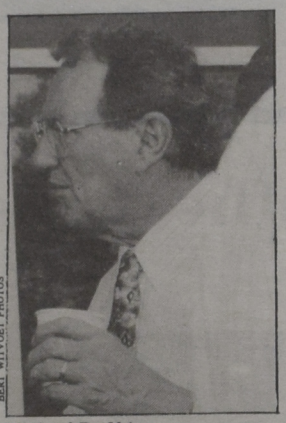
Michael De Vries (pastor), Classis Holland: The majority report breathes a fresh, renewing wind of the Spirit. It will create a sense of shalom.

It's a small step in the right direction. How will a female face all these restrictions [in recommendation 3]? Jesus had a keen ear for the hurting. Women are hurting. The only way I can support these restrictions is to try to unify the church.

George Marsden (elder), Classis Kalamazoo: If it had been God's intention to reveal a detailed church order, he would have done so; but it's not there. We have to be flexible on these issues.

Aldon Kuiper (pastor), Classis of the Heartland: This is an issue of confessional importance. I move we go to the minority report. (Defeated with a two-thirds majority. After this, all the recommendations of the majority report were accepted either by a two-thirds majority or by such a strong voice vote that a count was not deemed necessary).

Joel Kok (pastor), Classis North Central Iowa: God humbles us through compromise rather than us humiliating each other by trying to win.



BERT WITVOET PHOTOS

Michael De Vries

Alan Walters (elder), Classis Zeeland: This can become a Pandora's box for other issues such as infant baptism and premillennialism.

Henk Van Andel (elder), Classis Alberta North: It is not necessary to adjudicate our differences. This is not a court of law. The time has come to make room for each other.

Robert Godfrey, Classis California South: This is a defeat for those who oppose women in office. This will not be a compromise but an impossible binding of consciences.

John Kerssies (pastor), Classis Eastern Canada: This is the ethical approach. It shows that we respect one another.

Howard Vanderwell (pastor), Classis Georgetown: I was deeply hurt by the decision of Synod 1990 to open all offices to women. I was confused by Synod 1992 which closed the door. My concern is with the life of the church and its ministry. I plead with you to put this matter behind us and pass the recommendation that accepts both positions.

John Zantingh (pastor), Classis Hamilton: This is the first time that we have common ground [from the majority and minority reports].

George VanderWeit (pastor), Classis Lake Erie: It's been said that the issue divides us. *We* have divided us for not making room for each other.

Loren Zwier (elder), Classis BC South East: We have to let go. We must dare to do something radical and table both reports. We must let go and not be like a pitbull terrier. [He then became like a pitbull terrier and challenged the chair when the latter did not accept his motion].

Warren Lammers (elder), Classis Iakota: The Word of God cannot be relative. One has to be right and the other wrong. This borders on being a salvation issue.

George Monsma

George Monsma (elder), Grand Rapids East: The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13 that *now we know in part.* Can't we admit that we know only in part?

Hans Visser (elder), Classis Alberta South: Could it be that we are resisting the Holy Spirit? Why can't synod leave this issue alone?

Jan de Koning (elder), Classis Toronto: The Dutch church in 1944 said there can be only one way. That resulted in a split where the one church became more and more intolerant and the other more and more liberal.

James Van Tholen (pastor), Classis Central California: The majority recommendation is not fair to either side of the debate. Fairness is not what we're after most. What we're after mostly is submission to each other.

Classes can decide on women in office

...continued from page 1

spirit of unity that had prevailed among the majority and the minority members. This was evident from the fact that the minority group had written the introduction for both reports.

Encouragement and gratitude

Classis Huron delegate Ralph Koops said that he was going to return home "really encouraged," and that there had been "a common listening attitude" among the delegates. Synod watcher Rika VanderLaan from Toronto said, "I'm not jumping for joy, but I'm thankful that a step on the right road has been taken. It's a strange thing," she added. "It's a justice issue; and how do you react to something that gives you part-justice?"

According to Rev. Arie Van Eek of Burlington, Ont., the reason all the recommendations of the majority report passed was because Synod 1994 went too far in saying that only one position is clearly taught by Scripture. "Even some conservative members who oppose women in office found that that went too far."

The final decision "that synod urge the churches to recognize that this issue is not one of salvation and that even in our differences we remain sisters and brothers in Christ" failed to gain unanimity by only three or four voice votes.

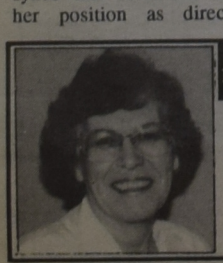
Synod approves abuse-response guidelines

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (Synod News Office) — The 184 delegates to the 1995 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, meeting for a third day on the campus of Calvin College, approved a detailed set of guidelines and procedures that will help churches deal with allegations of clergy abuse.

Beth Swagman, director of the denominational abuse-prevention committee, told synod that since she assumed her position as director in November 1994, some 40 cases of clergy and church-leader abuse have been reported to her. The guidelines are needed, she said, to demonstrate to abuse survivors that we understand and care, which is an important part of their healing and restoration process. She judges that the process is "fair and just, moves swiftly, and heightens and tightens issues of confidentiality — which is important for the survivors and perpetrators."

The document approved by synod includes guidelines for ministerial personnel in their interpersonal relationships, and two sets of procedures and guidelines for handling abuse allegations against a church leader: one to be used when the abuse victim is an adult, the other when the abuse victim is a child.

Abuse, as referred to in the guidelines, includes physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and spiritual abuse. When the abuse victim is an adult, an abuse-response team identified by the classis appoints a "hearing panel" to investigate the allegations before a church council takes action. According to Swagman, this process has been used and works well, although refinement will be needed as it is tested further.



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Denominational finances a concern

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (Synod News Office) — In 1996, members of the Christian Reformed Church will be asked to pay $244.99 each toward the ministry of the denominational agencies — or $567.29 per family. The financial advisory committee noted that it's becoming increasingly difficult to collect these ministry-share amounts from the churches. That situation presents denominational agencies with financial challenges. In 1994, only 60 per cent of total ministry shares were collected, in comparison to 78 per cent in 1992.

News

New policy on creationism

...continued from page 1

crafted a new draft policy to deal with the education minister's concerns. The proposed new policy states that "where other viewpoints [on the origins of life] are presented or discussed, teachers are encouraged to be aware of and to respect the personal beliefs of their students without promoting, through instruction, any one belief system."

The policy also says "students shall be encouraged to discuss the scientific pros and cons of the alternative theories without being criticized for their opinions."

"The draft policy is an attempt to preserve as much of the present practice as possible," says Chamberlain, noting that it calls for scientific arguments for and against all theories, including evolution. "Now evolution must also be investigated for validity."

Main points went unchallenged

Chamberlain says he's frustrated that the two main points made by opponents of the old policy often went unchallenged. While many accepted the argument that teaching creationism equals teaching religion, Chamberlain insists this is not the case.

"Scientific creationism is just a scientific hypothesis that an intelligent cause must have stood behind the creation of the universe," he says, citing the scientific evidence that bodies like the Institute for Creation Research have found in favor of creationism.

As for the argument that the old policy contravened the B.C. School Act, Chamberlain notes that ministers of education from previous governments said the policy was in accordance with the school act.

"The only change is a new minister coming in with a new interpretation of the school act," he says.

Many community members, particularly Christians, objected to the interference of the Minister of Education — particularly because most of the opposition to teaching creationism came from people and groups outside of the Abbotsford area. A 1993 poll by CV Marketing Research found that 67 per cent of Abbotsford residents reject the theory of evolution. Richard Peachey, an Abbotsford parent, said that teaching only evolution would go against community standards.

"It would be unfair to parents and students of this community, the majority of whom reject the evolutionary worldview," Peachey told a public meeting on the draft policy.

Sid Couperus, pastor at Trinity Christian Reformed Church, pointed out in a sermon that neither theory is scientifically untouchable.

"It takes as much faith to believe in the theory of evolution as the theory of creation," he said. "At least we're up-front and state that our knowledge of how the world began depends on faith."

For his part, trustee Chamberlain regrets the Minister of Education's decision to get involved, calling it "heavy-handed interference that should never have happened."

"This action has scary consequences for elected local school boards and for local autonomy," he says.

Byker approved as Calvin College president

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (Synod News Office) — After an hour-long interview, synod ratified the appointment of Gaylen Byker as president of Calvin College, the official college of the Christian Reformed Church. Byker currently serves as a vice-president for Offshore Energy Development Corporation in Houston, Texas. An alumnus of Calvin College, Byker has since earned his Ph.D., and worked as a lawyer, assistant professor, and investment banker. Byker will assume his new position on July 5 of this year, working with current president Anthony Diekema until the end of August. Byker will become the eighth president in Calvin's history, the third in the last 44 years.

Christian arts school's impact felt throughout Western Canada

Gordon Legge

CALGARY — The curtain is going up nationally for the Rosebud School of the Arts. The rural Alberta Christian performing arts school signed a partnership agreement Wednesday, June 7, with two local Bible colleges, Rocky Mountain College and Alberta Bible College, to serve as their drama department.

At the same time, discussions are under way for a similar agreement with the Prairie Bible Institute and Canadian Nazarene College. Under the agreement classes will be held at Rocky Mountain College, with Rosebud providing the instruction, training and resources. It follows a successful pilot project last year at Rocky Mountain.

"We've walked into a whole new era this past year," says LaVerne Erickson, Rosebud's executive director. Erickson says this is only the beginning. Discussions are under way with similar colleges across Canada.

The Rosebud school, which puts on the Canadian Badlands "Passion Play" during the first two weeks of July in Drumheller, is also talking with universities throughout Western Canada about providing training in large productions for their fine arts programs.

If that's not enough, the school runs a dinner theatre in Rosebud, as well as the Chemainus Theatre Company on Vancouver Island, and is working with provincial governments in Saskatchewan and Manitoba to establish theatres in those provinces as well.

For information about Rosebud's programs, call (403) 677-2350.

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Editorials

The Holy Spirit proved me wrong

I must admit that I went to synod thinking there was no way out of the women in office issue without doing great damage to the fragile fabric of the denomination. If the decision of '94 was allowed to stand, the climate for the more progressive wing of the church would become more and more unbearable. Yet how could 29 overtures against last year's decision be ignored? On the other hand, if '94 was overturned and the Church Order was changed, that would alienate many who are opposed to women in office. I feared any outcome.

But I was proven wrong by the turn of events at this year's synod. An entirely different scenario developed from what I had anticipated. Synod '95 came up with a compromise solution that seemed to leave room for both positions in a significant way. It is now left up to each classis to decide whether Church Order Article 3-a with its restrictive term "male" is operative in that classis. And regardless of what classis decides, female elders may be ordained in any church.

It was encouraging to see that the vote was not a close one as at previous synods. Over 60 per cent is a significant majority in any decision regarding this contentious issue. Unique, too, was that both sides of the issue in the advisory committee expressed "appreciation for the faith of each one and his conscientious approach toward the problem" (from the introduction to the majority and minority reports). Also, several delegates commented how the mood of this year's synod was so much better than last year's. There was no great rejoicing on the part of those who wanted the opening up of the offices to women. There seemed to be no gnashing of teeth on the part of those who opposed it. The last vote, which declared that this issue is not a salvation issue, was nearly unanimous.

It became clear to us that last year's synod was partly responsible for this year's solution. That synod had over-reached itself, had gone too far. By declaring that one side was justified by Scripture and the other not, it had dealt the decision not to open the offices to women the death knell. Even those who did not favor women in office felt that synod '94 had gone too far.

Perhaps we can learn from this sad part of our history. Whatever our differences, we should resolve them in a way that produces no winners and no losers. By God's grace we can learn from the more conciliatory and loving approach of this year's synod, which, instead of humiliating some, humbled all. **BW**

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—provides opportunities for contact and discussion for the Christian community.

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Three fraternal delegates and the identity of the CRC

While I was covering events at the Christian Reformed synod last week I met a Dutch visitor who asked me whether I was happy with synod's decision to allow for ordaining female elders and pastors. I took the question to be a probe of where I stood in the scheme of things.

It was this man's opinion that the Christian Reformed Church in North America is the ideological counterpart of the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (GKN) — the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands). I thought he was wrong; I based my opinion partly on what I had heard from three fraternal delegates to synod.

Three different emphases

Fraternal delegate Rev. Richard Vissinga of the GKN focused his remarks on some of the ethical decisions his church has made (see story re: GKN/CRC relations, p. 9). He mentioned that his church sanctions same-sex relations of faithful partners. The GKN allows, too, for the abortion of severely handicapped fetuses, and for euthanasia in some circumstances, including seriously handicapped newborn children.

Fraternal delegate Rev. Henk Geertsema of the Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken (Netherlands Reformed Churches) commented that some congregations in his denomination have installed female elders though the offices have not officially been opened to women. But churches should not rule over one another, he said. To meet the secular world we need religious deepening of, and understanding of, the power of the Word of God.

A third Dutch fraternal delegate, Rev. Paul den Butter of the Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands) expressed disappointment at synod's decision regarding women in office. He saw the CRC's fellowship with the GKN as a problem. He noted increasing secularization of society and churches.

Two streams

I thought of what each of these fraternal delegates had said when I told the Dutch visitor with whom I was talking that I disagreed that the CRC is the North American counterpart to the GKN. To understand the CRC in North America you have to think of the second and third delegates, not Vissinga and the GKN.

The more progressive sector in the CRC is the counterpart of Geertsema and the Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken; the more conservative CRC sector is the counterpart of den Butter and the Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerken. I personally resonated deeply with Geertsema as he spoke; and I noticed that the conservative CRC delegates gave den Butter a standing ovation.

But no delegates I met at synod resonated with what Vissinga of the GKN said. In fact, Vissinga's speech almost caused a final break in the CRC's relations with the GKN. The vote had been 89 to 80. **BW**

Letters

Worship and labor interrelate

In the last several months you have had articles, editorials and letters on two topics: 1) The Christian school movement having some teachers represented by the Christian Labour Association of Canada; 2) The officebearers of the Christian Reformed Church being more or less active supporters of the Christian School movement, as one article in the Church Order makes reference to Christian schools.

The topics were discussed more or less separately, with pros and cons on each topic. I'd like to suggest that they are related, and if seen as such, will further the discussion.

If we first go back to reminding ourselves that worship, work and education are very integrally related, then in our differentiated society where we have institutions set up for each of these, we can't but be overwhelmed by all the inter-relations of church, school and labor.

We go to school to prepare for the labor world; we go to church to be equipped to be sent out to serve. The church has always had a teaching ministry, e.g. Jesus, when on earth, was called a teacher; and the Holy Spirit is called a mentor. When we labor five or six days steadily we look for some sustenance and replenishing. When some have to labor on Sundays, then worship at or near work during the week takes on new meaning.

The church has Bible studies set on the theme of work, thereby being in a teaching mode about labor. And what is the Christian labor movement but putting some of that teaching into practice?

Joe Reitsma
Bowmanville, Ont.

Toronto Vineyard is about renewal

We have been going to the Toronto Vineyard for eight months. This renewal is about God's love for his people.

As we abide in him through prayer and meditation on the Word, he abides in us.

The Toronto Renewal is not about manifestations, (even though I have experienced them). It is about God equipping his people for renewal in his church. I have received several gifts of the Spirit which are given to us to be used in the church. The greatest gift is a deeper sense of love, joy and peace in Jesus.

I believe that we are at the brink of revival. How exciting it is to be in the Christian Reformed Church at this time!

Lorraine Mol Van Harten
Campbellville, Ont.

50th Anniversary Rearview Mirror

Calvinist Contact, May 27, 1960

Thirty-five years ago as summer began there were floods in Canada; they weren't in Alberta, but in northern Ontario, and CC noted the fact on its front page with this photograph and Dutch-language explanation.

Meer dan 1000 personen moesten geëvacueerd worden vanwege een voorjaarsoverstroming in de buurt van Timmins in N. Ontario. Deze foto toont de hoofdstraat van South Porcupine.
(More than 1,000 people had to be evacuated because of a spring flood near Timmins in northern Ontario. This photo shows the main street from South Porcupine.)

Former CC correspondent keeps in touch

This time I felt like writing a few lines to your fine paper. A relative handed me the issue of May 5, 1995, with so many stories and pictures of the Second World War in Holland, more than most papers had.

Living for some time in the U.S., we still keep up with a lot of Canadian news. In the early '50s, I myself was a correspondent for *Calvinist Contact* and was living in what is now Surrey, B.C. I even found an early edition of *Canadian Calvinist* at someone's place. It must have been from the very beginning years and was printed in Edmonton and edited by Rev. Paul de Koekoek.

There have been many changes since those days, but we always keep contact with a few papers from either side of the border.

The Liberation issue brought back a lot of memories. Once more , thanks. And greetings to the Straatsmas in Brampton, Ont.

Dick Kooistra
Sumas, Wash.

News

Archbishop Tutu opposes official status for Christian faith

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (EP) — Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu is speaking against attempts to base South Africa's post-apartheid constitution on Christianity, and has called for South Africa to be a secular state.

"I don't need the state to help me become a Christian," Tutu said in an address to the Cape Town Press Club. "We don't need state power to propagate our faith...; our greatness should owe nothing to the patronage of the state."

Crowds of more than 3,000 people demanding a new constitution based on Christianity marched on parliament, but Tutu said that the marches "ignored the diversity of religious belief in the country," and added, "We give religion a bad name when we campaign so recklessly and irresponsibly."

Tutu assured the world he would "stand up and oppose" any state-propagated policy that is "un-Christian, immoral" or "unjust." He said that the policies already enacted in South Africa would ensure absolute protection for freedom of religion.

Tutu, 63, was awarded the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize for his anti-apartheid stance before South Africa's first all race election one year ago.

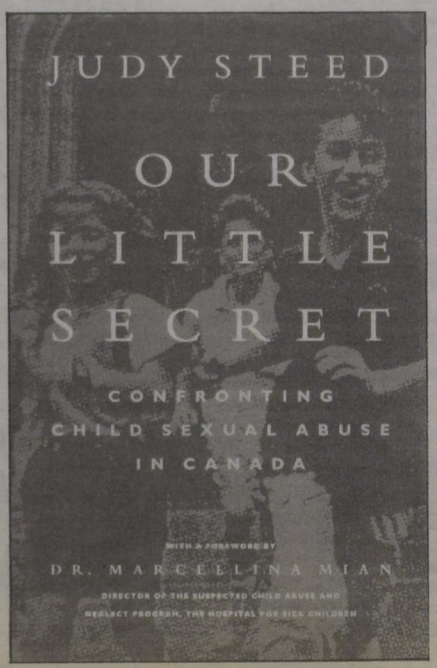
Books

Media/Arts

An eye-opening account of abuse in Canada

Our Little Secret: Confronting Child Sexual Abuse in Canada

by Judy Steed. Toronto: Random House, Canada, 1994, hard cover, 216 pp., $27. Reviewed by Sophie Vandenberg, Norval, Ont.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WITH A FOREWORD BY
DR. MARCELLINA MIAN
DIRECTOR OF THE SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PROGRAM, THE HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN

Our Little Secret is a riveting book which confronts the stark realities of child sexual abuse in Canada. Journalist and author Judy Steed makes this grim subject real by introducing us to "its perpetrators, its enablers, its investigators, its victims, its healers and the ordinary people whose disbelief keep the cycle of betrayal going."

In observing Steed's cases it becomes clear that one of the greatest obstacles to breaking the cycle of abuse is the "sea of denial" that such deeds can be done by people we know.

Another obstacle is the nature of the legal system. Changes in Canadian law *have* begun to make it more possible for victims to bring the perpetrators of these crimes to justice, illustrating with examples. But the system is still tipped in the favor of perpetrators and away from victims seeking justice. "The victim has no right to counsel, no right to legal aid and no right to address the court."

Steed chronicles the historic Mount Cashel investigation that, in the 1980s, helped for the first time to crash the "collective denial" of Canadians. She points out that... "the vast majority of abused children are preyed upon by parents, relatives or trusted friends within 'affinity systems.'"

The staggering numbers of this crime's little victims and the atrocities which many of these children endure are so abhorrent they are barely possible to believe — *except* that Judy Steed provides documentation of actual cases that have moved through Canada's courts.

We meet John Gallienne, the charismatic choirmaster of St. Paul's Cathedral in Kingston, Ont., convicted of molesting 13 boys, and whose victims police estimate may well be in the hundreds. Winning the trust of families, he preyed upon the children of his so-called "best friends." He even molested children in their own homes while their parents entertained other guests downstairs.

As appalling as Galliene's actions were, equally astonishing is the inaction of those who knew what was happening. One of the parents of a choir boy who subsequently committed suicide said, "It was as if the victims didn't matter.... Everybody wanted to protect Gallienne."

At the elite Brown (public) School in Toronto a man in his 30s called the school principal to warn about teacher John Freestone because he himself had been molested as a child by this teacher. As the investigation began, a dominant pro-Freestone faction emerged in the school community. The school community raised more than $10,000 toward Freestone's legal fees!

Steed writes that "such a strong show of support for Freestone shut the children up; they couldn't have devised a better plan." One of the teachers called the girls who came forward "dirty liars," and students were asked by the principal if they wanted to donate money to a bake sale to build Freestone's defense fund.

Steed explains that such vehement reaction of denial and anger on the part of otherwise caring and intelligent people is common to such situations.

Steed also documents the unthinkable multigenerational network of ritual abuse in the tiny community of Prescott, Ont. By 1993, 225 alleged victims had been identified, 55 people were charged, half of whom had been processed through the courts, with a 93 per cent conviction rate.

Because it is such an assault to the sensibilities that a child should be sexually violated by an adult "we cannot bear to believe it happens. Yet our horror of the act leads us to abandon children and protect perpetrators."

This powerful book will be worthwhile reading for anyone who has, works with, or cares about children.

Healing born out of faith

Conquer Your Mountain: How to Win Over Obstacles On Your Journey to Wholeness

by Miriam Mollering. Calgary: Life Impact Ministries, 224 pp., $19.95. Available at Food for Life Church Supplies, Christian Publications. Reviewed by Gordon Legge, Calgary, Alta.

Childhood traumas can become adult mountains. One person who understands that better than many is Christian counsellor Rev. Miriam Mollering.

One day a few years ago she grew tired of seeing new clients who had been through years of counselling but couldn't seem to overcome the problems at the core of their lives. So the former Calgary counsellor wrote this book about it.

It's one thing to uncover childhood wounds, she says. But it takes God's help to salve them and overcome bitterness, disappointment, the inability to forgive and other emotional wounds. In her book, which she published herself last summer, Mollering integrates modern psychological principles with her belief that God lies at the heart of healing and wholeness.

"For me that presents a total package for someone," says Mollering, who recently moved to Kitchener, Ont., but was back in Calgary last week to talk to a national women's conference about recovering from broken trust.

"Within the heart of every person is a vacuum only God can fill," says Mollering, who understands the distress many people feel since she, herself, had to work through the pain of being sexually abused as a child.

The book always points to God. While she presents tools or life impact principles for dealing with a variety of situations, each chapter ends with a prayer.

In recent years there has been a steady growth in the caseload of Christian counsellors across the continent, and a corresponding growth in groups like the Christian Counsellors Association of Alberta (CCAA), which was incorporated in Calgary earlier this month after meeting informally for several years. There are groups like it forming in other parts of Canada; a national convention is slated for 1997. In the U.S., the American Association of Christian Counsellors has brought together 14,000 Christian counsellors during the past two years.

Such groups aim to bring a higher level of confidence and credibility to the Christian counselling profession by establishing a registry and a set of ethical standards.

Integrating psychology, theology

Thumb through Mollering's book, laced with quotations from the Bible, and you quickly get a picture of the kind of holy ground counsellors often traverse.

Mollering lists the "mountains" in people's lives where the summit seems always out of reach:

* Masks people create to hide old wounds — mistrust, denial, arrogance, self-pity, poor self-image, the inability to forgive and anger;
* Memories and expectations from the past that torment people;
* Coping mechanisms developed in families with addiction problems;
* Depression;
* Low self-esteem.

Then she talks about the mountain of victory. "Wholeness is possible for every person," she says. "Peace is possible. It is possible to enjoy life and be all that God wants them to be." Mollering and other Christian counsellors like her believe, from their own experience, that happens when people come in contact with God's unconditional love for them.

"Love is a wonderful antidote to pain and abuse," says Jim Robertson, a founding board member of CCAA. "Often, as Christian counsellors, our techniques only focuses the actual work of God in our sessions. It's amazing to sit back and watch God work in the session to bring light out of darkness, hope out of despair." It's there that people stand on the mountaintop.

Christian Reformed Church Synod 1995

What synod decided about women in ecclesiastical office

Bert Witvoet

A nine-hour debate held during a heat wave on June 19, with the air conditioning failing temporarily, resulted in synod's passing all seven recommendations by the majority of its advisory committee on women in ecclesiastical office. The majority report borrowed heavily from the overture submitted to synod by the council of Woodlawn CRC in Grand Rapids (Overture 62). The members of the majority were: John Kerssies, Chair (pastor, Cl. Eastern Canada); John Van Schepen, Reporter (pastor, Cl. Greater Los Angeles); Neal Afman (elder, Cl. Rocky Mountain); Ralph Koops (pastor, Cl. Huron); German Moreno (pastor, Cl. Florida); Edward (Ned) Nielsen (elder, Cl. Thornapple Valley); Bruce Persenaire (pastor, Cl. Central California); Henk Van Andel (elder, Cl. Alberta North); Jan Vandergeest (elder, Cl. Chatham); Joel Zuidema (pastor, Cl. Northern Michigan).

The first of the following seven recommendations was passed by a 112 to 66 roll-call vote; the others were passed by voice votes.

Recommendation 1

"That synod recognize that there are two different perspectives and convictions, both of which honor the Scripture as the infallible Word of God, on the issue of whether women [should be] allowed to serve in the offices of elder, minister, and evangelist."

Grounds:

"a. The numerous overtures to this synod on this issue, as wells as decisions and reports of previous synods, adduce good biblical grounds for both positions.

"b. The Scriptures (e.g., Romans 14), as well as previous synodical decisions advocate a position of tolerance on non-confessional issues."

Recommendation 2

"That synod decide the following:

"A classis may, in response to local needs and circumstances, declare that the word *male* in Article 3-a of the Church Order is inoperative, and authorize the churches under its jurisdiction to ordain and install women in the offices of elder, minister, and evangelist."

Grounds:

"a. Previous synodical assemblies have failed to provide satisfactory leadership on the matter of women in ecclesiastical office. Placing the responsibility for decisions on this matter at the classical level will allow local circumstances and differing views to be dealt with more effectively.

"b. The current compromise used in a number of local situations, of giving women the function but not the office, though expedient in some ways, is theologically problematic and inconsistent with a Reformed view of office and ordination, and insufficiently regulated."

"c. This declaration provides, in effect, a 'regional' option, which requires classical approval. While providing an opportunity to respond to local needs and circumstance, it avoids the danger of congregationalism which could accompany the adoption of 'congregational' option.

"d. There is precedent for declaring parts of the Church Order inoperative. From 1914 to 1955, the articles on particular and regional synods (47-49) were placed in parentheses. The churches were agreed that these would be inoperative, i.e., not implemented until such time as it might be appropriate to implement them."

Recommendation 3

"That synod adopt the following regulations associated with this declaration:

"a. A classis which has decided that the word *male* in Article 3-a is inoperative for its constituent churches shall not have the right to delegate women officebearers to synod.

"b. A classis which has decided that the word *male* in Article 3-a is inoperative for its constituent churches shall not have the right to appoint a [female] minister to serve as synodical deputy.

"c. A classis which has decided that the word *male* in Article 3-a will remain operative for its constituent churches shall nevertheless acknowledge a church's right, in response to local needs and circumstances, to take exception to the decision of classis as it applies to the office of elder. In such a case, the classis shall not exercise its disciplinary authority to enforce compliance, provided that the role of [female] elders is restricted to the local church in which they hold office.

"d. In the consideration of applications for candidacy for the office of minister of the Word submitted by qualified women, both the Board of Trustees of Calvin Theological Seminary and synod shall ensure that trustees and delegates will not be forced to participate against the dictates of their consciences. In the declaration of candidacy, delegates will exercise their right to abstain from voting without pressure or reprisal.

"e. The general secretary shall maintain a list of classes which have decided that the word *male* in Article 3-a of the Church Order is inoperative for their constituent churches, and publish that list annually along with the presentation of candidates for the ministry in *The Banner.*

"f. Synodical agencies shall not appoint women as ministers of the Word to any field of labor within their jurisdiction, nor seek to have them installed by a local church.

"g. Synodical deputies shall not be asked to participate against the dictates of their consciences in any matter relating to ministers of the Word as provided in Articles 6-18 and 82-84 of the Church Order."

Recommendation 4

"That synod declare that this arrangement be in effect until the year 2000, at which time it will be reviewed."

Grounds:

"a. This course of action will effectively remove the debate from the floor of synod for a number of years, and allow the denomination and its churches to concentrate on their ministries.

"b. It will also allow the denomination to determine the effects of this decision in some regions before further considering this issue.

"c. A period during which the issue is not hotly and bitterly debated will allow the denomination to prayerfully reflect on the issue without the pressure of an imminent decision."

Recommendation 5

"That synod designate Recommendations 2 and 3 as Supplement, Article 3, of the Church Order."

Grounds:

"a. Placing this decision, together with its regulations, in the Supplement, as opposed to changing Article 3-a of the Church Order itself will reflect its temporary nature, and allow Article 3 to remain as it is.

"b. A decision with regard to the addition of a supplement to an article of the Church Order does not need to be ratified at a following synod. Since all appear agreed that the denomination should put an end to our lengthy discussions of this issue, this will allow Synod 1995 to make a decision which will accomplish that goal, at least for a number of years. In addition, a decision without the need for future ratification will allow some classes to deal expeditiously with a number of irregular situations which are currently present."

BERT WITVOET PHOTOS

Guests and delegates mingle during coffee time.

Recommendation 6

"That synod urge the church to recognize that this issue is not one of salvation and that even in our differences we remain sisters and brothers in Christ."

Ground:

"Unity in the church will only come when we focus on him who unites us, Christ Jesus our Lord, instead of those issues on which we differ."

Recommendation 7

"That synod declare this to be its answer to overtures 49-76, and 85, and Communications 1-4 and 6."

It showed a new way

Bert Witvoet

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Dr. Henry De Moor, professor of church polity and church administration at Calvin Seminary, was the person who drafted the overture on women in ecclesiastical office that Woodlawn CRC sent to synod. This overture became the basis of the report that synod adopted and which allows a classis to declare the word *male* in Church Article 3-a to be inoperative.

De Moor was not surprised that synod turned to his church's overture. "It showed a new way. Before this the church was going between the congregational option and the denominational option," he said. "This steers a middle course by allowing classes to decide. It allows the church to put the issue behind us."

Dr. Henry De Moor

Canadian churches will take charge of their own ministries — sort of

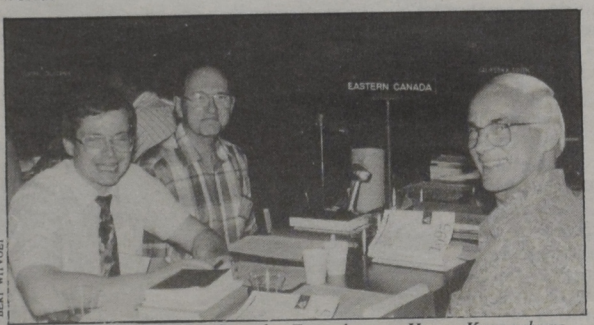
Bert Witvoet

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — The Christian Reformed synod overwhelmingly approved a restructuring proposal for the denomination's ministry in Canada. The scheme will change the landscape for the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada (CCRCC). In fact, the council has been asked to reconstitute itself as the Board of Canadian Ministries at its November 1995 meeting.

The proposal, which came from synod's advisory committee on the subject, was a modified version of the proposal made by the committee to study structure for ministry in Canada, a synodical study committee. Apart from the fact that the abbreviation for Board of Canadian Ministries — BCM — is less unwieldly than CCRCC, synod's hope is that the restructuring will also simplify the work the Christian Reformed Church does in Canada.

One and bi-national

Before agreeing to the restructuring of the CCRCC synod first affirmed that "the Christian Reformed Church in North America is dedicated to being a truly bi-national denomination engaged in ministries in Canada and the United States, and throughout the world."



Delegates from Eastern Canada. From l. to r., Henry Kranenburg, Allan Groen and Kees Van Dieen.

But the meat of the recommendation was the one that asked the CCRCC to become the Board of Canadian Ministries with members to be drawn from all Canadian classes. This board will be directly accountable to synod, and not to the denomination's board of trustees.

Full implementation of the proposal will not come until the Synod of 1997 approves both a mandate for this board and plans to involve the Canadian churches — a mandate and plans which the new board itself must develop.

Synod delayed action on the appointment of a director of Canadian ministries until Synod 1997 approves the mandate and plans submitted by the BCM.

Synod also defeated a motion to appoint a committee to study the matter of delegating deacons to major assemblies. It was felt that there was no rush to appoint such a committee, and some feared that sending deacons to synod would be a backdoor opportunity to send female delegates. A synod decision made the previous day prevents female elders and ministers from being delegated to synod until at least the year 2,000.

Diverse opinions

It was clear that the Canadian delegates' diversity of opinion on the matter did not help the discussion on the floor. According to Robert De Moor, chair of the restructuring committee, this was not surprising, since the first option which most Canadians favored, he believed, was to have a regional synod. Once that first option was taken away, the second options were all over the place, he said.

One main concern of the restructuring proposals was that Canadian ministries be effectively run by Canadian churches. Delegate Gordon Pols put it this way: "I have a dream of a church in Canada that takes effective charge of its own ministry, that it can set and collect its own ministry shares, in close consultation and co-operation with the U.S. [church].

Spectre of nationalism

John Bolt, Calvin Seminary advisor to synod and a former Ontario resident, expressed the fear that "the poison" of Canadian nationalism would be interjected into the discussion.

Wietse Posthumus strongly objected to Bolt's comments and said that the discussion is about an effective ministry in Canada, not a matter of nationalism. "We have different laws, a different social consciousness, different opportunities in Canada," he asserted. Posthumus wanted a Canadian national synod so that Canadian ministries would be answerable to such a synod.

Vice-president Jack Vos of Barrie, Ont., said that he was disappointed that some delegates had raised the "spectre of nationalism" in the discussion. One of the greatest failures of the church is not to identify with its surrounding — its country and its neighborhood, he said. "It is time for us in Canada to take charge of our ministries." Vos felt that a board was not needed so much as a Canadian ministries assembly.

On the other hand, Fred Koning of Beamsville, Ont., argued that a new structure was not needed and he sensed that "a move is afoot to begin a Canadian CRC."

Still, all in all, it was a low-key discussion which ended with the Canadian delegates applauding the American delegates for their patience in sitting through four hours of discussion on what was basically a Canadian concern.

What synod said about ministries in Canada

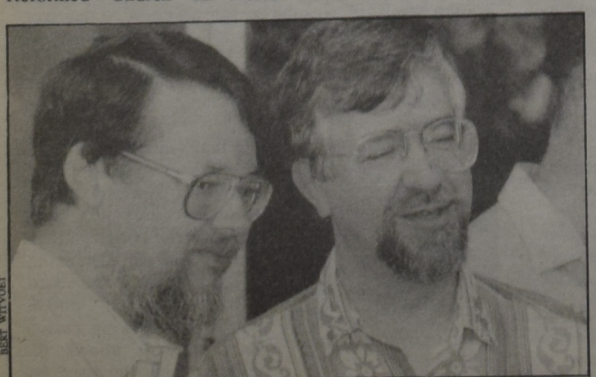
Below are synod's decisions, with their grounds, regarding restructuring the denomination's ministries in Canada.

Recommendation 1

"That synod affirm:

"a. that the Christian Reformed Church in North America is dedicated to being a truly bi-national denomination engaged in ministries in Canada and the United States, and throughout the world.

"b. that the [CRCNA] commits itself to develop ways to structure the ministries of the denomination that will retain its bi-national character at the same time that it takes into account its history, geography, and national character that is specific to the churches in Canada, and to the churches in the United States."



Delegate Rev. Robert De Moor (l.) and Rev. Herman Praamsma.

Recommendation 2

"That synod remind its agencies and boards to consciously take our bi-national character into account."

Recommendation 3

"That synod propose to the CCRCC [Council of CRCs in Canada] that at its November 1995 session, it reconstitute itself as a **Board of Canadian Ministries** [emphasis theirs]. Synod further requests that this board be:

"a. comprised of members to be drawn from all Canadian classes,

"b. mandated to submit for approval to the Synod of 1997 a mandate for the BCM to co-ordinate and hold accountable all Canadian ministries of the CRC, plans to involve the Canadian churches, projected costs, and its plans for the integration of Canadian ministries, and

"c. directly accountable to synod."

Grounds:

"a. This will provide the CRC in Canada and the United States with the opportunity to discover the answers to the complex questions by an ongoing process of action and reflection.

"b. This will give Canada the freedom [it] needs to develop a ministry appropriate to [its] national situation while retaining the accountability and integrity of our bi-national communion.

"c. This will provide the ecclesiastical support and connectedness necessary for solid development of Canadian ministries."

Recommendation 4

"That synod appoint a committee to serve the [CCRCC] meeting of November 1995 with a draft of possible ways and means to implement the above resolutions. Such a draft would detail possible structures to co-ordinate and supervise the ministries of the CRC in Canada."

Recommendation 5

"That this committee be made up of one member of the [synodical] study committee, one member of the [synodical] advisory committee, two members of the interim committee of the [CCRCC], two Canadian members of the [denominational] Board of Trustees, and two members at large.

CRC will maintain ties with its Dutch 'mother,' despite controversial speech by GKN rep

Marian Van Til, with files from Bonny Wynia and Darrell Maurina

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — A controversial speech by a Dutch fraternal delegate sparked an unexpectedly long and heated debate which nearly resulted in the Christian Reformed Church in North America's severing its 140-year relationship with its mother church, the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (GKN), the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands.

The issue of CRC/GKN relations was due to be discussed just a few hours after GKN fraternal delegate Rev. Richard Vissinga brought greetings from his church. (The CRC does not allow pulpit exchanges with GKN pastors, but has maintained ongoing dialogue with the Dutch church.)

It was clear when the discussion began that Vissinga's speech had not gone down well with most delegates.

He hit on one sore point after another with CRC delegates when elaborating on his assertion that "the times of strong synodical pronouncements to church and nation are over": his church's acceptance of ordaining practicing homosexuals; its accepting of "faithful" homosexual relations "as a gift"; its believe that it is "not irresponsible to terminate [the] life" of seriously handicapped newborns and adults seriously ill; its conclusion that there is no need to bring the gospel to Jews, but rather that there should be "mutual witness" between Christians and Jews.

Perhaps Vissinga's most volatile statement was his spin on Galatians 3:28: "Where believers are true to each other in love, and are committed to the edification of Christ's church, the Apostle's words become true that in Christ there is neither male nor female, slave nor freeman, Jew nor Greek — and, I might add, neither hetero nor homo."

BERT WITVOET

Toronto delegates Jan de Koning (l.) and Wietse Posthumus.

A daughter shouldn't disown her mother

Fifteen of the 17-member advisory committee on maintaining or breaking ties with the GKN had recommended that the CRC not sever ties, not because the CRC agrees with the GKN's stances on many issues — including its approach to Scripture — but because it should keep discussing "the issues and trends in the life and practice of the GKN that are of deep concern to the CRC and [which] trouble our ecclesiastical relations."

In the end, the majority committee's advice won out, perhaps helped by speeches of various Dutch-born delegates who either had been born into the GKN or who still have relatives there and feel much closer ties to that church than do most natives of North America.

Rev. Morris Greidanus (Cl. Grand Rapids East) explained, "You are speaking of the church I was baptized in, so you have to be more careful talking about them. 'You make friends, but you've got your family,' said Greidanus, translating a Dutch proverb. "You may not like your mother or father, brother or sister, but they're still your family."

Greidanus was responding to pointed comments by Rev. Bernie Tol (Cl. Zeeland), who said Vissinga's speech indicated that "for at least 12 years we've been talking, but they ain't been listening. Jesus says, sometimes you have to draw a line in the sand and love him more than mother or father, brother or sister."

However, some delegates with close ties to the GKN took distance from it. Minority advisory committee chair Rev. John Noordhof, whose parents were baptized in the GKN and who still has a number of relatives in that church, said, "I know there are many personal, sentimental ties, but based on the evidence before us...it's time to terminate the relationship."

Delegates finally voted 89 to 80 (with a number of delegates abstaining) not to break fraternal relations with the GKN.

That did not end the matter, however. The next morning there were new proposals presented asking again for either suspension of, or complete breaking of ties. Some wanted to suspend ties, beginning in 1997; others wanted suspension to start in 2000 if the GKN did not change its position on homosexual practice and/or euthanasia; others wanted the matter sent back to the advisory committee so that a new proposal could be drafted in light of Vissinga's speech and the ensuing discussion.

All of this met with strong opposition, however. Clarence Boomsma, administrative secretary of the CRC Interchurch Relations Committee, acknowledged that Vissinga hadn't said anything they didn't already know about the GKN. But synod's mandate had been — after 32 years of special discussions — to decide "to terminate or not to terminate, one way or the other."

And in the end, the Christian Reformed Church in North America decided to keep talking with its recalcitrant mother because, in the words of Rev. Edward Van Baak, vice-president of the Interchurch Relations Committee, "We are going to continue to believe that patient dealing with the GKN synod, churches, and members will bring about change" — change wrought by God.

Synod clarifies children's admission to Communion

Children welcomed by four-step procedure

Bonny Wynia

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (Synod News Office) — Synod 1995 has clarified the process for allowing children to partake of Communion. Since 1988 children have been welcome to the Lord's Supper, but since then congregations have encountered some questions about how to implement synod's 1988 decision.

For example, would young children be expected to make the same profession of faith as young adults? And if so, would they be eligible to vote and expected to pay into the church budget?

In response to this dilemma, Synod 1991 appointed a study committee to clarify what it means for younger children to profess their faith. In 1993, synod considered the study committee's recommendations but sent them back for further clarification.

Public profession liturgy geared to young hearts

Now, Synod 1995 has encouraged congregations to welcome children to the Lord's Supper by way of a four-step procedure:

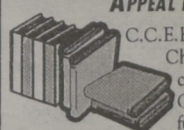
First, the child expresses interest in taking Communion; second, the parent(s) discuss the significance of this step with the child and contact the pastor or a council member; third, the church leader(s) meets with both the child and his or her parent(s), hears the child's testimony, prepares the child for a public profession of faith and recommends to council that the child be admitted to the Lord's Supper; fourth, in a public worship service the child professes his or her faith in Jesus.

Synod also adopted a profession of faith liturgy for children that is simple and more appropriate than the current liturgy which is intended for young adults or adults.

Synod urged church councils themselves to find a way to help a child who has turned 18 years old to make the transition to adult membership with its responsibility and privileges.

The CRC will still count members in two categories: baptized and confessing. Confessing members include children and adults who have publicly professed their faith.

APPEAL FOR HELP!



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Feature

Talking it over

Meredith Faith Norr

I felt overwhelmed. My son's illness was not just a bout with the flu; it was serious.

When the news reached my friend Maria, she called me.

"It's too bad," she said, in a caring voice, "but Danny is lucky to have you for a mother. I can't think of a more capable person to cope with this matter."

Was Maria out of her mind? I wondered. Didn't she know that I was possessed with dread?

Even through the present tension and anxiety, however, I remembered the source of help I had discovered some years ago. Oh, yes, I thought. I know what I must do!

After numerous tests, Danny was put into the hospital. Tests continued during those days in early February but the cause of the illness eluded the doctors. Finally, Dr. Jacobs told us that Danny had rheumatic fever. His heart was affected, and he would need to be watched closely.

The end of uncertainty, at least, brought relief. Danny was in good hands. I knew recovery would not come quickly.

While the hospital staff spoke highly of Danny's co-operative attitude, he clung to me every time I visited him.

"Don't go, Mommy!" he would say. "Please stay longer!" I fought back tears, knowing that if I lost control it would excite Danny even more.

One day when I visited Danny, a couple of doctors were at his bedside.

"He's developed an allergy to the medication," one of them explained.

Since the fever had returned, the focus was on bringing it down. Then, the doctors would change his medication.

I had arrived hopeful. I left feeling downcast.

Fortunately, another form of medication produced good results, and at last the day arrived for the patient's return home. Danny's care would be our first concern; other activities of the household would be of less importance.

We made up a board that stretched across Danny's bed, and there we gathered after dinner each evening. Usually, friends came to visit.

How the laughter rang out from time to time! Every jigsaw puzzle misfit was funny. Pranks the players conceived to liven up Old Maid were even funnier. Those evening get-togethers were a tonic for our sick child.

The attacks of panic I had suffered over Danny's illness became less frequent and less severe. Yet I knew that I was not applying what I had learned much earlier.

With effort, I looked back at

C.C. FILES

myself as a child from a second-storey bedroom window in our rural home. I had searched the horizon. A peat swamp some 20 miles away had caught on fire in early summer months of a drought-plagued year.

Since peat fires burn underground there is no way to extinguish them except for heavy rains. No rain had fallen for a long time. I watched from my station every morning, and upon seeing the dark cylinder of smoke rolling across the western horizon, I cringed in fear.

The fire would come charging over the miles to our home, I was sure. We would all be swept into its blazing passage.

When I confided that to a friend in more recent years, she asked, "Why didn't you tell someone about your fear?"

"Why, I don't know," I replied.

I remembered having wondered, *Why doesn't someone ask me what's wrong?*

We went over the episode again.

"I see," I said, at last. I finally realized that the fear that had haunted me through the years was my responsibility to share. Instead of asking for help, I had clutched the fear tightly, allowing it to enter every new situation. I realized, again, that it is up to each of us to look for a way to unburden ourselves.

It was necessary for me to talk about Danny's illness. *Tomorrow*, said my weakness. *Now!* my stronger self replied.

I called Maria that same day. With a lump in my throat, I said, "Maria, I fear for Danny's future!"

Maria didn't ask for more than I offered. She listened.

Those few words helped lift my burden.

The familiar Psalm words, "Be not far away!" were joined by other simple words from Isaiah: "I will trust and not be afraid."

On my son's birthday, April 27th, he was given permission by the specialist attending him to walk the length of our driveway, a distance of about 50 feet. Besides watching his feeble steps, I saw the glossiness of tiny newborn leaves that were late in sprouting. Danny and I laughed at a robin which chortled with such gusto that he stumbled in his place on the front lawn.

That evening, Maria and I talked on the phone.

"I didn't think Danny would ever walk again!" I said. "When he went to the hospital his ankles were so swollen and painful they would hardly hold him up."

She didn't make light of what I confided.

"You've been terribly frightened, Meredith," she replied. With the warmth of the summer season, Danny grew healthier. His doctors' visits became two months apart, then three, and finally, six months. Suntan and healthy color covered the pallor of his thin cheeks. Gone now were the times he came in to rest after playing hard, pretending he didn't care for that game.

As for me, I stopped putting my hand on his forehead, scouting for a hint of fever. Instead, I touched him lightly when he was near and said under my breath, "For you are a gracious and merciful God."

One day, Maria and I went out for lunch. We talked about familiar matters, activities and home affairs.

"Maria," I said to her, "thank you for not pressuring me to tell more than I did about my feelings during Danny's illness. I still find it hard to say I'm scared.

"Fear has been a monster to me. It once took on the proportions of a dinosaur, galloping over the days, weeks and years. It devoured happiness and good expectations."

Maria smiled. "The bigger the fear, the higher the hurdle," she said. "You made that hurdle to unburden yourself."

I knew she understood. Fear locked inside one's heart has demonic force. It assumes all the power of an evil spirit.

When I opened up about my childhood experience with fear, I learned a lesson. If I don't tell anyone what's bothering me, I have made a choice to hang on to my pain instead of letting go.

As Danny grew well and strong again, I resisted the temptation to worry about a relapse. Later, when his shouts and those of his friends rang out from the yard where they played touch football, I rejoiced.

I have learned a lesson. We cannot escape times of anxiety and uncertainty. We can be sure of God's presence, however, if we ask for it. And we can relieve our fears by the simple act of telling someone we trust.

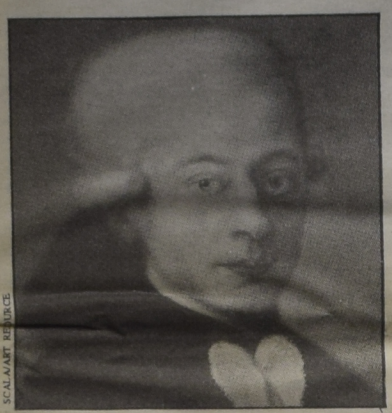
Meredith Faith Norr is a freelance writer who lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Feature

The day Mozart beat the Grim Reaper

Curt Gesch

I had left the classroom to speak to someone in the school office. While I was gone, a student quickly shoved a tape by Grim Reaper (a popular rock group at the time) into the cassette player in my classroom and turned up the volume. (The fact that we were studying Ecclesiastes 1:2 in Bible class at the time may or may not have been significant.)



SCALA/ART RESOURCE

Oil portrait of Mozart by an unknown artist (Museo Biblioteca Musicale, Bologna, Italy)

You may guess that when I heard the noise emanating from the Bible classroom I hurried back with fire in my eyes and the mercy of a Scythian in my heart. But before I could get to my room I saw James walk past the open door, swivel on his heels and walk into the Bible classroom. Now James, who was in Grade 10, was anything but a highbrow music critic. He was, however, socially secure, a sports star and an all-round charmer. James simply cocked an ear to Grim Reaper, looked at the Grade 12 students and said, "What's wrong with you guys? You should be listenin' to Mow-zart. He's cool."

Bless his heart! James was a member of a music history class I was teaching. The class was for students in grades 8-10 who weren't in the school band. The students in this class had a reputation for either despising music or knowing only one note, the wrong one. But the students soon demonstrated a love for music — and not pop music. We started by singing Gregorian chants in an empty gymnasium. Next were Genevan psalms (some — it is true — played with jazz arrangements). Then Bach with his improvisations, counterpoint and syncopation. And then the classicism of Haydn and Mozart that mowed down Grim Reaper.

Unless I miss my guess, a large part of our motivation for teaching "media" comes from a desire to free students from its power. We probably figure that the enemy one knows is easier to guard against than a disguised enemy. (Another possible motive — appreciating the artistic merits of various mass media as God's gifts — will not be discussed here.)

So we hire consultants and workshop leaders to help us know how to teach media studies. We read books by Marshall McLuhan, Quentin Schultze and Neil Postman to gain insight. And we strive desperately to stay current so that we can "network" with our students as we study and discuss television, cinema and CD recordings of popular artists.

C.C. FILES

Madonna

As critic Neil Postman points out in *Technology: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* (Vintage, 1993), we do need to address "a young man who believes Madonna to have reached the highest pinnacle of musical expression." In fact, such a fellow may lack "the sensibility to distinguish between the ascent and descent of humanity."

But it is possible that Media Studies 10 is not the only approach or the best approach to freeing students. As Postman points out, "There is no subject better suited to freeing us from the tyranny of the present than the historical study of art." Perhaps that is what Mozart did for James. And it is no accident that those who see the similarities between Dixieland music and Bach are not slavish copiers of the latest musical trend.

Past sheds light on the present

Studying contemporary artistic works that speak elegantly, imaginatively and movingly about significant aspects of life is enhanced by students' thorough grounding in the arts and ideas of the past. When my English classes study movies like *Dead Poets' Society* and *Cool Hand Luke*, they do so with a foundational knowledge of Greek humanism, especially as idealized in Promethean independence, gleaned from a six-week study of mythology in Grade 9.

C.C. FILES

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart playing the spinet, accompanied by his father and his sister.

Perhaps we would not want to go as far as Postman, who advises schools to "stay as far from contemporary works as possible." But certainly he is right in suggesting that "because of the nature of the communications industry, our students have continuous access to the popular arts of their own times." It may be that some of the resistance of certain student groups to studying popular culture comes from a sort of competition.

Need astute teachers

It is a rare teacher (and perhaps an immature one) who is as immersed in pop culture as are his or her students. Some students will always be one up on the teacher when it comes to allusions to other pop works, biographies and advertisements. In a certain sense, one can say that spending lots of time studying pop culture is studying something to which students already are overexposed and which they largely do understand.

It is certainly the case, however, that a knowledge of the arts and philosophies of the past can illumine the present, broaden and deepen one's awareness, enrich the imagination, and perhaps even increase appreciation for those selected works of pop culture that a teacher may choose to be an integral part of his "regular" arts, literature, or social studies curriculum.

"Mow-zart is cool" beats a unit on Grim Reaper any day. As a matter of fact, I think James and I will settle back and read novels while we listen to Botch and Brahma.

Curt Gesch has taught English, Bible, arts and business in Christian schools in British Columbia.

Judgment as Good News

Laura Smit

CHAPTER & VERSE

"All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left" (Matt.25:32,33).

When I was ordained into the ministry of the Presbyterian Church I had to sustain an examination on my theology before the members of the presbytery. One of the questions which I was asked was: "Do you believe in hell?" It was with some reluctance that I answered Yes.

Like many people, I have often wished that I could ignore the Bible's teachings on judgment and hell, that I could believe instead in universal salvation. The idea of judgment seems so unloving and vindictive, unworthy of God's mercy.

But lately I have come to believe that judgment is really *good news*. It is good news for us that God is not only loving and merciful, but also just and holy. Edmund Burke once said, "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing." On a cosmic level, the same may be said of God. All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for God to remain passive and tolerant. If there is no judgment, then evil triumphs. God will not allow that, and for that we should be grateful.

Evil will not triumph in heaven

My community has recently been rocked by the brutal slaying of a local police officer, the first officer in our town to ever die in the line of duty. The murderer is currently on trial, and his face looks out at us from the front page of newspapers and from television news coverage. He shows nothing but contempt for those around him and gives no evidence of shame or remorse for his actions, though he killed without motive or provocation.

I ask myself whether I will see this man in heaven. Perhaps I will. But I am convinced that if he is in heaven, he will be changed beyond recognition. If he refuses to be changed, if he persists in his willful embrace of hatred and violence, then no, God will not allow him into heaven, not because God lacks mercy but because he will not allow evil to triumph.

Grateful for God's justice

When I consider the case of someone so obviously evil, then I see how grateful I should be for God's justice. What joy would there be in heaven if evil were allowed to run rampant there lest God appear intolerant or judgmental?

If this is clear in the case of this murderer, it should also be clear in less extreme cases. Not only do I not want God to allow Adolf Hitler to stride into heaven unrepentant and unchanged, I don't want him to allow *me* such access either. Part of the joy of heaven is that my own evil will be judged and eradicated, that I will not only be forgiven but also sanctified.

It is as if we are all infected with a deadly virus and God insists that we be decontaminated before we enter his Kingdom, that our infected clothes be burned and our hair cut off and our bodies washed.

Ruling in hell or serving in heaven

Some people can't wait to shed the infected clothing and to feel clean again. Others refuse the treatment. Milton said that some people would rather rule in hell than serve in heaven. That is a choice which God honors.

This is good news. It is good news that heaven will not be held hostage by evil. It is good news that we will enter heaven as clean and holy people.

It is good news that God does not simply accept us as we are, but rather helps us to become what we were created to be.

We need not apologize for our belief in the eventual judgment of "the quick and the dead," as if God were committing some grave social *faux pas* for which we need to make excuses. Rather we should look

forward to judgment with confidence and gratitude.

Laura Smit is pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Clayton, N.J.

Synod sets limit on small-church funding

Bonny Wynia

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (Synod News Office) — The Christian Reformed synod has made some significant changes to the ministry funding policies for small churches which apply for financial assistance.

The denomination's Fund for Smaller Churches (FSC), which supports 108 congregations to varying degrees, has an annual budget of $1 million. According to the report submitted to synod by the denominational Board of Trustees, 86 of those 108 churches have been receiving assistance for more than 10 years, with five of them receiving assistance for at least 90 years.

The board requested that synod set a 10-year limit on financial support, citing reasons which included an increasing number of requests for assistance during the past seven years; an insufficient level of oversight and accountability built into the system; a decreasing amount of monies available; the belief that short-term financial assistance encourages a more effective ministry and help to generate a church's full potential.

Allowing exceptions

Synod adopted the board's proposal. Beginning Jan. 1, 1996, FSC grants will extend for a maximum of 10 years, decreasing by 10 per cent each year. That will allow, it was believed, sufficient time for a congregation to make plans for its future ministry.

Synod did make provision for churches to apply for continued or additional assistance, but the primary responsibility for that decision has been transferred to the classes. In order for the FSC to continue funding beyond 10 years, the classis must be willing to contribute one dollar for every two dollars contributed by FSC, and to provide direct oversight of those ministries/congregations.

The FSC committee is also to hold biennial regional conferences for smaller churches in order to increase fellowship, peer encouragement, education and skill development. The committee must work with church agencies to implement an assessment process that will help pastors identify skills, motivational factors and commitments most beneficial to smaller church ministries.

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Other CRC synod business

Synod News Office

Moving away from two services?

In an effort to allow for a variety of congregational practices, synod proposed an amendment to the Church Order that would loosen the requirement for two worship services on Sunday.

Pending ratification by Synod 1996, the phrase "assemble for worship ordinarily twice" will replace the phrase "assemble for worship at least twice."

No action on proposed Korean classis

Synod withheld action on a request to create a Korean-speaking classis in California. Instead of approval, synod encouraged the appropriate existing classes and denominational agencies to bring a more complete proposal to next year's synod.

Clarifying 'ratification'

Synod approved a series of regulations in response to questions about the ratification process by which Church Order changes are made. Currently, weighty matters which require a Church Order change require ratification by a subsequent synod so that the churches have time to become acquainted with and discuss the matters.

Under the new regulations, a proposed change has the same status as the recommendation of a study committee, and will be represented by designated person(s) when it comes to synod for ratification.

Also, synod clarified that changes to the Church Order Supplement are not subject to the ratification process.

How significant are your own actions?

Synod apparently couldn't decide how seriously church members should take its decisions. It withheld action on a request that it clarify the meaning of "settled and binding" with regard to its synodical actions.

On the job with author Sigmund Brouwer

Does being a Christian make a difference?

Nandy Heule

Sigmund Brouwer has written over 28 books since 1989.

He specializes in fiction for young boys who love to identify with heroes beating the odds in Indiana Jones-style adventures. With about 450,000 books in print and under contract with one of North America's larger Christian publishers, Brouwer is by all accounts a successful author.

He is also a Christian and member of New Life Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Red Deer, Alta. Many of his juvenile books, although published by a Christian publisher, are now being sold widely in the secular market through book clubs for school kids.

Brouwer's newest adult novel is also expected to "cross over" into the secular market. Double Helix, *a 325-page Christian thriller about a scientist who applies genetic engineering on human embryos, is due for release in August by Word Publishing.*

Christian Courier *met Brouwer at "God Uses Ink," a Christian writers' conference organized by the magazine* Faith Today *and held at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont., in June.*

Name: *Sigmund Brouwer*

Age: *Thirty-something*

Job: *best-selling fiction author, especially Christian juvenile fiction for boys*

Company: *Self-employed*

Location: *Red Deer, Alta., with travel throughout North America*

How did you become a best-selling author?

After completing Calvin College with an economics major, I attended the journalism program at Carleton University in Ottawa. In the early '80s this landed me a job as editor at a Florida-based racquetball magazine. That was my day job.

Meantime, I burned the midnight oil, mainly writing short stories for boys. I would write a story, send it off to unknown editors at far-away magazines,

CC FILES

Sigmund Brouwer

and eventually receive a polite "thanks-but-no-thanks" rejection letter. Somehow I kept believing that my stuff was great and I kept writing.

About seven years and 2,000 pages later, the tide turned. In 1989, Dick Broene, editor of *Crusader*, the magazine of the Calvinist Cadet Corps (the Christian Reformed equivalent of Boy Scouts), accepted a story for publication. Moreover, Broene was supportive of my work. He encouraged me to write book-length adventures based on the characters I developed in my short stories.

I've never looked back. I decided to write books for boys. I started to realize that I had stumbled across a market need. There didn't seem to be many books for young boys on Christian bookstore shelves, and no one seemed to be writing about kids' favorite winter sport — hockey!

I carefully put together a book proposal. I meticulously researched the market need for Christian juvenile fiction and continued to do so even after being published. (At one point, I even included statistics about the increased sales of hockey sweaters in the United States, in an effort to convince my publisher to let me write a hockey series.)

In April 1989 I signed a book contract with Victor Books (a division of Scripture Press Publications) in Wheaton, Ill., for the first two titles in a series of six boys' books.

My first title, *Lost Beneath Manhattan*, now has 50,000 copies in print and has been translated into Dutch, Norwegian and German. It's in its seventh printing and narrates the adventures of two 12-year-old boys who get lost in New York City.

I turned to full-time fiction writing in 1991 and have written over 28 titles, also including adult Christian Westerns and the upcoming thriller *Double Helix*.

What is your typical day like?

It's not as exciting as one might think. I get to my office in downtown Red Deer around 8 a.m. The mornings are reserved for writing. It's my goal to write at least five pages a day. The afternoons are for administrative jobs. I don't have an agent and negotiate personally with my publisher, booking agents and the like. I do employ a part-time secretary.

About 100 days of the year I'm on the road, mainly to speak at schools. I talk to about 10,000 kids a year all over North America. In talking to these kids it's my goal to turn non-readers into readers.

Does it make a difference to be a Christian?

The writer's job is to represent truth through fiction. God is truth and part of our world. It's unthinkable for me to write fiction that wouldn't include God, because God is part of my world view.

As I heard another author say once: it's not so much that I try to put Christ into my fiction; rather secular writers leave God out of the picture all together.

It's also important to me as a Christian writer to do the best I can. If someone puts down $10 for one of my books, he should get $10 worth of entertainment.

What do you like best about your job?

Intergenerations

Under 30

Careers

Family

Seniors

I feel satisfied when I complete my daily goal of five pages. I enjoy my work. I receive my success as a blessing. My work is God's gift to me.

Anything you dislike?

Writing is work and I dislike work, but the Calvinist work ethic always hunts me down. I feel guilty when I don't complete my five pages. Work ethic notwithstanding, I do put in about 80 rounds of golf each season.

And what about your future?

I just want to keep writing.

The opinions in the column are those of the persons interviewed only and may not reflect average working conditions. Please contact Nandy Heule at (905) 988-6174 or at the CC office if you know of a person you would like to see interviewed for this column.

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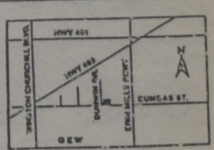

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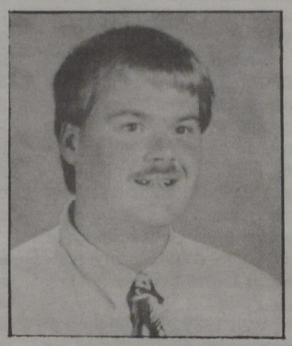
Future, not past, makes baseball *non grata*

SPORTS



Robert Janssens

Would you send your children to a school which may not stay afloat for the next year? Would you buy a stereo system with a five-year warranty from a store holding a "going out of business" sale? Or a used car from a guy in a 1970s checkered suit who promises that the vehicle was previously owned by a little old lady?

Obviously, wise consumers of any goods or services shop around for the best deal, ensuring that the product suits their current and future needs. So why should we be surprised that fans of major league baseball have stayed away from stadiums in droves this year? The ugly strike of '94/'95 obviously caused a great deal of bitterness towards not just the players, but the sport of baseball in general.

As far as I'm concerned, though, statistics had shown that its popularity was already deteriorating even before last August. Expansion watered-down the talent pool; divisions were realigned away from the traditional four; the designated hitter absurdity remains; winning a division becomes irrelevant with addition of a wild-card playoff entry; and the traditional Saturday afternoon "Game of the Week" on network TV has been replaced by scattered coverage of regional matches, robbing fans of the unity that comes from all watching the same game.

However, these sins (the strike, combined with these assaults on the traditionalists) of the past only give half the explanation as to why fan interest in baseball is sinking faster than Carlos Delgado.

Trying to hoodwink fans

As I stated in a previous column, the owners and players have yet to sit down and negotiate a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). The players ended the strike, not because a deal was reached, but because the owners as a group were charged in court with bargaining unfairly. As a result, the salary cap was forced off the table, leaving the players with no reason to continue striking. Ironically, it was the players who wanted a free market system; the owners wanted artificial controls placed on the market. In labor strife, it is usually the reverse.

The point is, that without a CBA the players may again walk away and re-strike (if the owners reassert their salary cap demands). Further, if this does not occur, and fans are treated to a World Series, the owners may lock out the players next spring. The union even acted as if it were doing the fans a *favor* simply because it promised to play this July's All Star Game.

Hard-core fans are refusing to invest money or passion into the sport because many are afraid of another World Series-killing strike or lockout. They may have forgiven the sport for its sins of the past (and that's debatable) but are most afraid of its future. Suddenly that checker-suited car salesman is looking more credible all the time — compared to the jesters of baseball.

○○○○○

Readers of this column were not surprised when the Quebec Nordiques NHL franchise was sold (for $75 million) to interests in Denver. The surprise was that the Winnipeg Jets somehow were able to remain in Manitoba. Before you tell me "I told you so," understand that it had more to do with the Minnesota investors being unable to acquire the necessary financing. Laughably, a lot of the misguided credit went to fund-raisers such as Winnipeg school children rolling and sending their penny collection to the team.

It was also humorous to watch the frantic Toronto media hoot 'n' holler about the Leafs possibly moving to their "rightful" place in the Eastern Conference, to take Quebec's old spot. These people need to realize that the NHL owes the Leafs no such consideration, and will give it only in the context of adding future teams via expansion. I guess local scribes are still looking for an excuse to explain the Buds' first round playoff defeat!

Robert Janssens teaches at Trinity Christian School, Burlington, Ont.

What do you think, George?

BERT WITVOET

George VanderVelde (far left), who had written an article critical of the restructuring of Canadian ministries proposal, is seen in a discussion with Calvin Seminary president James De Jong during a coffee break. Former CRC financial director Harry J. VanderMeer (far right) is in discussion with an unknown delegate.

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Marriages

VERSLOOT/WITVOET:

Bert and Alice Witvoet and Antonia E. Vrijenhoek-Versloot excitedly announce that their children

JOHN PETER WITVOET
and
DOREEN JOHANNA VERSLOOT

expect to be married on July 1, 1995, in the First Chr. Ref. Church of Calgary, Alta.

Their address will be: #8-210-25th Ave. SW, Calgary, AB T2S 0L9

Thank You

LOS:

We would like to gratefully acknowledge all those who remembered us on our recent 45th twofold anniversary. Thank you for your cards and notes, for your presence at our open house and for travelling the distance to get there. We now treasure the memory of your thoughtfulness. Most of all, Soli Deo Gloria!

Rev. and Mrs. Dick and Alice Los.

VAN DYKEN:

We wish to express our sincere thanks and appreciation for the many cards and visits on the occasion of our 50th wedding anniversary.

We thank our God for blessing us these many years and making this occasion possible.

Dirk and Janke Van Dyken, Strathroy, Ont.

Marriages

HIEMSTRA/KLINGENBERG:

Believing that the Lord, in His grace and loving care, has brought

JULIE DENISE
and
RONALD JAMES

together, we as parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Hiemstra and Mr. and Mrs. Gerrit Klingenberg, are thankful and happy to announce their marriage, D.V., on Saturday, August 5, 1995.

Future address: R.R. #2, Wroxeter, ON N0G 2X0

VAN DER WAL/BRUINSMA:

Desiring God's will for their lives and believing that includes each other

MARIANNE
and
RICHARD

together with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Richard and Helena Van der Wal and Mr. and Mrs. Sid and Mona Bruinsma, wish to announce their forthcoming marriage. They will be united in the Lord Jesus Christ on Saturday, July 8, 1995, at 11 a.m., at the Bethel Chr. Ref. Church, Acton, Ont., Rev. Bernard De Jonge officiating.

Future address: 78 Southcote Rd., Ancaster, ON L9G 2V9

Miscellaneous

WANTED:

Help to **move my belongings to Winnipeg, Manitoba.** If you are driving West this summer and have spare room in your car, please call **Dirk Schouten (905)945-5335.**

Anniversaries

Groningen Canada
1955 1995

On July 12, 1995, it will be 40 years ago that we

TOM and HENNIE BERGSMA

were united in marriage. Thankful to our heavenly Father for keeping us together all these years, we hope to celebrate this anniversary with our children, grandchildren, relatives and close friends on July 8, 1995. God has been good to us — we praise Him.

Address: 221 Southfield Dr., Strathroy, ON N7G 3V3

1945 July 12 1995

With joy and thanksgiving to the Lord, we are happy to announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

AREND and MARIE DEBOER
(nee VANDER MEER)

We pray that the Lord may bless them and keep them in His care.

Congratulations and love from:
Sid & Joanne
Adrienne & John Keizer
Jasper & Marg
Arnold & Janet
and grandchildren.

Friends and relatives are invited to an open house on Saturday, July 15, 1995, at the Wellingstone Christian Home, 1415 Upper Wellington, Hamilton, ON L9A 5E8, from 2-4 p.m. Best wishes only.

1935 July 3 1995

With thanksgiving to our heavenly Father, we wish to announce the 60th wedding anniversary of our parents

MARTEN and ALICE HIEMSTRA
(nee V.D. MEULEN)

We congratulate you Heit and Mem, Pake and Beppe!

May God continue to be near to you and be a blessing for each other and to us, your children.

Frank & Gerda Hiemstra — Bowmanville
Miner & Wilma Brink — Newcastle
Gerry & Rita Hiemstra — Navan

Lots of love from your 13 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren!

Home address: Durham Chr. Homes, 100 Glenhill Drive S., Apt. 404, Whitby, ON L1N 8R4

There will not be an open house due to illness.

Haren, Gr. Beaverton, Ont.
1935 July 4 1995

With joy and thankfulness to God we wish to announce the 60th wedding anniversary of

NICK and MARTHA HOMAN
(nee MEYER)

Psalm 121.

Open house on July 5, 1995, from 2-4:30 p.m., at Edengrove Beach Recreation Hall, Beaverton, Ont.

Best wishes only.

Address: Edengrove Beach, Box 25, R.R. #1, Beaverton, ON L0K 1A0

Anniversaries

1970 June 11 1995

"Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.

With joy and thanksgiving to our faithful God, we celebrate the 25th wedding anniversary of our parents

HARRY and TINE HOUTMAN
(nee RHEBERGEN)

Congratulations, Mom and Dad. May God continue to bless you.

With love from Heather, Ruth and Neil.

Family and friends are invited to an open house on Saturday, July 15, 1995, from 3-5 p.m., at the Willowdale Chr. Ref. Church, 70 Hilda Ave., Willowdale, Ont.

Best wishes only, please.

Home address: 45 Harriet St., Toronto, ON M4L 2G1, (416) 461-1207.

Stiens Burlington
1945 July 11 1995

"For great is His love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord" (Ps. 117:2).

We announce with thanksgiving and joy the celebration of the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

ED and LUCY JORRITSMA
(nee RIJPSTRA)

We praise God for His abiding love and goodness during these 50 years and we pray for His continued nearness in the years to come. We thank you, Mom and Dad, for your love and support to us as children and grandchildren.

Pat & Ian Smith — Fort St. John, B.C.
Sean, Adam
Will & Diana Jorritsma — Burlington, Ont.
Mark, David, Daniel, Paul, Catrina
Andrew & Johanna Jorritsma — Beamsville, Ont.
Sarah, Janet, Arlene, Jeffrey, Andrea
Shirl & Brett Hinch — Victoria, B.C.
Hillary
Gary & Cathy Jorritsma — Vineland, Ont.
Christopher, Shannon, Jonathan, Katie
John & Brenda Jorritsma — Beamsville, Ont.
Samantha, Harrison, Brandon

Open house will be held on Tuesday, July 11, 1995, from 6-8 p.m. in the Burlington Chr. Ref. Church, 3422 New Street, Burlington, Ont.

Best wishes only, please.

Home address: 3260 New Street, Apt. 200, Burlington, ON L7N 3L4

Anniversaries

1955 July 2 1995

With thanks to God we will celebrate the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

DICK and WILMA STRONKS

We have all been blessed by your loving support and guidance. May the Lord continue to bless your lives together.

With love from,
Henry & Diane
Anna, Derek, Helena, Gerard
Glenn & Joanne
Joshua, Amanda
Rick & Kelly
Ed & Barb

Rijswijk Vineland Station
Z.H. Ont.
1945 July 18 1995

"Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain. In vain you rise up early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat — for He grants sleep to those He loves" (Ps.127:1,2).

With praise and thanksgiving to God, our heavenly Father, we hope to celebrate, the Lord willing, the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

WILLEM K. and MARIANNA C. VAN HARTINGSVELDT
(nee VAN VELDEN)

We are thankful to the Lord for His abiding love and covenant faithfulness. It is our prayer God will continue to bless Dad and Mom and keep them in His care.

Job & Jacqueline — Eureka, N.S.
Michael, Robert, Rebecca, Joel
Bill & Mary — Port Dover, Ont.
Justin, Brooke, Maria
Michael & Rita — Jordan Station, Ont.
Jordan, Elliott
Peter & Karon — Burlington, Ont.
Daniel, Kevin, Michelle, Stefan, Dylan

An open house will be held on Saturday, July 22, 1995, from 2-4 p.m., in the Trinity Orthodox Ref. Church, 99 Scott Street, St. Catharines, Ont.

Best wishes only please.

Home address: 4354 Victoria Ave., Box 25, Vineland Station, ON L0R 2E0

Personal

Born-again Christian, professional business executive, non-smoker, with biblical family values (attractive brown skin, Canadian, 37), **seeking female with similar believes and values**, under age 34. Please write to: **Tony, 7030 Copenhagen Rd., Unit #57, Mississauga, ON L5N 2P3; Tel. (905) 812-1238. (Please pass this information on.)**

Classifieds

Obituaries

Eestrum, Fr. St. Catharines, Ont.
1908 - 1995

"My grace is sufficient for you: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor.12:9).

On June 6, 1995, the Lord gently called to Himself, His child, our beloved husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather,

GEORGE (SJOERD) DE VRIES

Loving husband of Lois.
Dear father of:
Helen & Harry Van Egmond
Peter
Sharon & Gilbert Swick
Dear Pake of Gerry and Wilma, Linda, George, Mary and Drew, Helen and Darren, Doug, Cathy & Phil, Christine and Danny, Dean and Cindy, Michelle and Ray.
and 10 great-grandchildren.
We are comforted by the assurance that he is at home with his Lord and Savior whom he loved and served so faithfully.
The funeral service was held at the Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church, St. Catharines, Ont., with Rev. Lammert Slofstra officiating.
Interment at the Niagara Lakeshore Cemetery on June 9, 1995.
Correspondence address: Mrs. L. De Vries, 9 Sullivan Dr., St. Catharines, ON L2N 1K3

Maassluis Brampton
the Neth. Ont.
April 5, 1909 - June 7, 1995

"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the Shadow of the Almighty" (Ps.91:1).

On June 7, 1995, the Lord called home, His child

HETTIE HORLINGS
(FLACH)

Beloved wife of Walter Horlings for 56 years.
Dear mother of:
Joan & Peter Schaafsma — Brampton, Ont.
Tom & Helen Horlings — North York, Ont.
Elsie Horlings — Thornhill, Ont.
Frank & Bettie-Ann Horlings — Bradford, Ont.
Walter & Nance Horlings — Plymouth, Mich.
Dear grandmother of David, Michelle and Rob, Dan, Rochelle and Jouke, Nichole and Roger, Mark, Curtis, Ryan, Chad and Matthew.
Great-grandmother of Joel.
Funeral service was held on Saturday, June 10, 1995, at the Holland Marsh Chr. Ref. Church.
Memorial service was held at Holland Chr. Homes, Brampton, Ont. Interment at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, Bradford, Ont., Rev. P. Van Egmond officiating.
Correspondence address: Walter Horlings, 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., Holland Chr. Homes, Hope Towers #215, Brampton, ON L6V 3N2

Obituaries

On Wednesday, May 31, 1995, the Lord took into His eternal home our dearly loved sister, sister-in-law and aunt

TINA (TRYNTJE) JAGT
(nee PRANGER)

at the age of 94 years and eight months.
The Lord, whom she loved, strengthened and sustained her throughout her long journey on earth, and now she may see Him face to face, singing His praises.
She will be sadly missed by sister Anna in the Netherlands, sister-in-law Aagje Pranger-De Vos, and many nieces and nephews in Canada and the Netherlands.
Predeceased by her husband of 62 years, Hendrik Jagt, two sisters and two brothers.
Funeral services were held on Saturday, June 3, 1995, at Holland Chr. Homes, Brampton, Ont., with Rev. P. Kranenburg officiating.
Family Schalk — Strathroy, Ont.
Family Pranger — Strathroy, Ont.
Family Pranger — Guelph, Ont.
Family Haverman — Sarnia, Beamsville, Hamilton, Ont.
Family Deen — Drayton, Ont.
Family Thyms — Assen, the Neth.

Teachers

CAMBRIDGE, Ont.: Cambridge Chr. School invites applications for a **maternity leave position, Grade 7,** beginning mid-November, 1995, to June 30, 1996. Ability to teach Senior French is required.
Applications will be accepted until August 8, 1995. Please send letters of application and resumes to:

Andy Vander Ploeg, Principal
Cambridge Chr. School
229 Myers Rd.
Cambridge, ON N1R 7H3
Phone: (519) 623-2261
or (519) 623-1317
Fax: (519) 623-4042

Roommate wanted

Female Fanshaw student needs roommate to **share 2-bedroom apartment in London, Ont.** $250 monthly, all inclusive. Available immediately.
Call (519) 649-7539 or
(519) 680-7844

For Rent

2-Bedroom cottage for rent **near Gravenhurst, Ont.,** 5 min. from Sparrow Lake, Gull Lake and Kahshe Lake. $250 per week.
Call (705) 689-9149

One-bedroom apartment for rent in **Vineland, Ont.** Fully self-contained, available July 1, 1995. Appliances/utilities included.
Call (905) 562-4908

Personal

ONE TO ANOTHER
Christian companion magazine. Hundreds of readers Canada-wide. Single issue $5.
Write to:
#302, 1502-2nd Ave. S.
Lethbridge, AB T1J 4A2

Church News

Christian Reformed Church

Available for call:
— Classis Eastern Canada, at its March 7, 1995, meeting, decided, after he successfully sustained an examination to be admitted to the Ministry of the Word in the CRC of N.A. via Art. 7 C.O., to grant **Mr. H. Lloyd Burghart** his request, and to declare him eligible for a call. This decision was made with the concurrence of the Synodical Deputies. Classis E. Can. heartily recommends that churches consider this brother for a call. Mr. Burghart's contract with the Seafarers Centre in Montreal ends on **June 30, 1995,** and after that date he may be contacted at his new address: **4395 Fairlane Rd., R.R. #1, Jordan Station, ON L0R 1S0 Canada. Phone (905) 562-5364.**
James Kooistra, Stated Clerk.

New clerk:
— Immanuel, Hamilton, Ont.: Mr. Jerry Bulthuis, 150 Linbrook Drive, Hamilton, ON L9C 2K9; (905) 389-2012; fax: (905) 389-1685.

Calendar of Events can be found on page 18...

Job Opportunities

Job Opportunities

Career Opportunity

Aldershot Greenhouses Ltd.

A well-established operation, has immediate openings for

GROWERS

to work in our pot mum and pot rose production. The applicant should be eager to work and self-motivated. Experience and/or education in horticulture is an asset.

Interested persons should send a resume to:
Aldershot Greenhouses Ltd.
1135 Gallagher Road, Burlington, ON L7T 2M7
or fax: (905) 632-4022
For further information contact Len VanderLugt or Earl Schouten at (905) 632-9272 or (905) 689-1774.

Director of Music

Inglewood Chr. Ref. Church of **Edmonton, Alta.,** requests applications for part-time **Director of Music** to give leadership in the music ministry of the congregation.
Send inquiries or letters of application to:

Inglewood Chr. Ref. Church
c/o Hanna Huibers
12330-113 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5M 2W4

by August 1, 1995.

Stewardship Officer

We seek a financial planning/gift planning advisor to the Christian community. Post-secondary degree and related experience preferred. Christian commitment, personal stewardly lifestyle, good inter-personal and public speaking skills are required. 3/4 time Sept.-May. Possibly full-time after.

Office Manager

This position requires superior organizational and management skills as well as computer literacy. We are looking for a take-charge person who can work independently. Half-time to evolve to full-time.

For detailed position description or explanation, call or fax, **in confidence,** to:
Christian Stewardship Services
#210-455 Spadina Ave., Toronto, ON M5S 2G8
Call: 1-800-267-8890 or
Fax: 1-416-977-4611

Classifieds

Miscellaneous

9%-1 yr **9.5%-2 yrs**

Successful real estate venture
requires up to **$400,000**
Financial statements and valuations available
Inquire in confidence to:

John Vleeming, C.A.
3507-113 Ave.
Edmonton, AB T5W 0P5
(403) 474-3025

Rev. Dirk Velthuizen
28 Campion Avenue
Guelph, ON N1H 5L4
(519) 821-4819

Miscellaneous

Bed & Breakfast

BB & B - ORILLIA
Your hosts:
Henk & Eva Kruyf

When in the **Huronia** area, come and stay with us for a night or two. We offer clean rooms, Dutch hospitality and a good home-cooked breakfast. We also specialize in serving guests requiring transportation. For reservations or information, call or write:

Best Bed & Breakfast
261 Nottawasaga Street
Orillia, ON L3V 3K5
Phone: (705) 326-4274

Miscellaneous

Celebrate

with your friends, relatives and family on special occasions by sending a meaningful gift to help deliver the **WORD.** Provide us the name and address and a celebration card will be sent.

THE BIBLE LEAGUE
P.O. Box 5037, Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8
Tel.: (905) 319-9500

Miscellaneous

The Living Word
Sermons for reading services.
Contact:
R. Vander Ploeg Secr./Treas.
210 Clarke St. N.
Woodstock, ON N4S 7M7
Phone: (519) 539-2117

Miscellaneous

FROM COAST TO COAST

ENGLISH RADIO:

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Burns Lake-CFLD	9:15am	1400
Kitimat-CKTK	8:30am	1230
Osoyoos-CJOR	8:00 am	1490
Penticton-CKOR	8:00 am	800
Port Alberni-CJAV	7:00 pm	1240
Prince George-CIRX	7:00am	94.3
Princeton- CHOR	8:00 am	1400
Smithers-CFBV	9:15am	1230
Summerland-CHOR	8:00 am	1450
Vancouver-CJVB	7:00 am	1470
Vancouver-(fm)	7:00 am	103.3
Vernon-CJIB	9:30pm	940

ALBERTA

Brooks-CKBR	8:00am	1340
Edson-CJYR	10:00am	970
Ft. McMurray-CJOK	8:30 am	1230
High River-CHRB	6:30am	1280
St. Albert-CHMG	8:00 am	1200

SASKATCHEWAN

Estevan-CJSL	8:00am	1280
Weyburn-CFSL	8:00am	1190

MANITOBA

Altona-CFAM	9:30am	950
Steinbach-CHSM	9:30am	1250
Winnipeg-CKJS	9:15am	810

ONTARIO

Atikokan-CFAK	9:30am	1240
Burlington-CING (fm)	8:00am	107.9
Chatham-CFCO	6:00 am	630
Fort Frances -CFOB	9:30 am	640
Guelph-CJOY	10:00pm	1460
Hamilton-CHAM	7:30am	820
Kapuskasing-CKAP	9:00am	580
Kingston-WLKC	7:30 a.m	100.7
Newmarket-CKDX	9:00 am	1480
Oshawa-CKAR	8:00am	1350
Owen Sound-CFOS	10:30am	560
Pembroke-CHVR	10:00am	1350
St.Catharines-CKTB	7:30pm	610
Sarnia-CHOK	7:30am	1070
Stratford-CJCS	8:45am	1240
Windsor--CKLW	8:30am	580
Wingham-CKNX	10:30am	920
Woodstock-CKDK (fm)	8:00am	102.3

NEW BRUNSWICK

Newcastle-CFAN	9:00am	790
Saint John-CHSJ	9:30am	700

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown-CFCY	7:00am	630

QUEBEC

Montreal-CFQR (fm)	7:30am	92.5

NOVA SCOTIA

Digby-CKDY	6:00am	1420
Kentville-CKEN	8:30am	1490
Middleton-CKAD	8:30am	1350
New Glasgow-CKEC	7:30am	1320
Sydney-CJCB	8:00am	1270
Weymouth-CKDY	8:30am	103.1
Windsor-CFAB	8:30am	1450

FRENCH RADIO:
Perspectives Réformées

ONTARIO

Cornwall-CFIX	9:30am	1170
Timmins-CRCL	9:30am	620

QUEBEC

Montreal-CHRS	8:00am	1090
Valleyfield-CFLV	8:45am	1370

TELEVISION:
Faith 20-TV
(Monday to Friday)
Ontario 5:30am
on the Global TV Network
Check your local listings for cable outlets airing *Faith 20.*

Vision -TV
(every Saturday)

British Columbia	4:00 & 7:00pm
Alberta	5:00 & 8:00pm
Sask. & Manitoba	6:00 & 9:00pm
Ontario & Quebec	7:00 & 10:00pm
Nfld., N.B., N.S. & P.E.I.	8:00 & 11:00pm

THE BACK TO GOD HOUR

P.O.Box 5070, Burlington,ON
L7R 3Y8 (905) 336-2920

Christian Courier
50th anniversary

C.C. has existed for 50 years and has launched its anniversary to celebrate five decades of Reformed, Christian journalism in Canada. This campaign will also boost our profile and intends to gain much-needed new subscriptions!
The paper's friends and suppliers have already agreed to help offset the expenses of printing and distributing a commemorative poster, church bulletin covers, and a special anniversary issue. We're asking you to help us celebrate 50 years of Christian journalism as well!

Clip and mail to Christian Courier,
4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

❑ Yes! I want to be part of Christian Courier's 50th anniversary and celebrate Reformed, Christian journalism in Canada.

❑ Yes! I want to receive a free copy of the commemorative poster (donations over $25 only).

Please find enclosed my cheque for:

❑ $100 ❑ $50 ❑ $25 ❑ $ my donation

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
Phone: _____ Prov.: _____ Code: _____

We cannot yet offer charitable donation receipts. Businesses can receive free advertisement space in the anniversary issue for donations exceeding $50. Please ask to receive our business sponsorship package. We gladly accept in-kind donations.

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Events/Classifieds

Calendar of Events

July 1 Banquet to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the CRC, **Nobleford**, Alta. Special program on July 3. Former members wishing to attend are invited to contact Tonia Schiebout at (403) 757-3837 or Bert F. Konynenbelt at (403) 824-3442.

July 1 "Frisian Picnic," 11 a.m., Pinehurst Conservation Park, Hwy. 24A, four miles north of **Paris**, Ont. We hope to see you all there!

July 1-2 40th anniversary of CRC, **Charlottetown**, PEI. Info.: Audrey Masselink, fax (902) 892-5525.

July 8 Ligonier Ministries of Canada presents "Disciplines in Grace," in **Hamilton**, Ont., with Rev. Marianno DiGangi and Jerry Bridges. Call 1-800-563-3529 to register.

July 10-28 "Summer School" at Wycliffe College and ICS, **Toronto**, Ont. For a brochure and registration details, call Ian Ritchie at (416) 979-2870 or fax (416) 979-0471.

July 12 "Hollandse Dag," 10 a.m., Caradoc Community Centre, **Mount Brydges**, Ont. Speaker: Rev. John D. Hellinga. Bring your own lunch and cup!

July 15 Fifth "Wieringermeer Picnic," 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Upper Queen's Park, **Stratford**, Ont. Please bring your own lunch!

July 17-21 "Summerfest," at Calvin College, **Grand Rapids**, Mich. Info.: (616) 957-6142.

July 23 Dutch worship service, led by Rev. John G. Klomps, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster**, Ont.

Aug. 4-7 "ICS Ontario Family Conference," featuring Elaine Storkey (Christian Impact, London, England) and others, at HDCHS, **Ancaster**, Ont. Info.: (416) 979-2331.

Aug. 16 Ligonier Ministries of Canada presents "Spirit Wars," in **Guelph**, Ont., with Dr. Peter Jones, of California's Westminster Theological Seminary. Call 1-800-563-3529 to register.

Aug. 16-19 "The Arts, Community and Cultural Democracy," a Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich., - hosted conference. Keynote speaker: Calvin Seerveld and Nicholas Wolterstorff. Sponsored by Calvin, Dordt, ICS and Free University. Info.: (616) 957-6488.

Aug. 18-19 Ligonier Ministries of Canada presents "Upon This Rock," in **North York**, Ont., with R.C. Sproul, Peter Jones and David Wells. Call 1-800-563-3529 to register.

Aug. 19 25th Anniversary reunion, Beacon Chr. High School, **St. Catharines**, Ont. For info. phone Fran Versluis-Koole at (905) 934-5761 or fax (905) 937-1130.

Aug. 27 Dutch worship service, led by Rev. Jerry J. Hoytema, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster**, Ont.

Sept.19-24 Ligonier Ministries of Canada presents "Upon This Rock," in **Charlottetown**, PEI, **Sydney**, N.S., and **Moncton**, N.B., with Rev. Eric Alexander (Glasgow, Scotland). Call 1-800-563-3529 to register.

Christian Festival Concert

By the Choirs and Brass of the

Ontario Christian Music Assembly

ROY THOMSON HALL

Friday, November 3, 1995, at 8.00 p.m.

Choir and Brass of the OCMA and Guests

(Below)
Leendert Kooij, Director

THE PROGRAM INCLUDES:
A wealth of beautiful music, both vocal and instrumental. Exciting Choruses from Oratorios. The solemn sound of a large choir. Organ and Piano Duets. The Kooij Sisters. Beautiful Gospel Music. Audience participation.
Soprano Solos. And much more....

A FESTIVAL OF PRAISE!

GUEST ARTISTS:
Maja Roodveldt, Soprano; Dirk Out, Organ & Piano;
Andre Knevel, Organ & Piano.

Tickets:

Main Floor & Mezzanine	$22.00
Balcony (Middle)	$18.00
Balcony (Sides)	$14.00

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90 Topcliff Avenue, Downsview, ON M3N 1L8
Tel.: (416) 636-9779
Please enclose payment. Seating is limited so don't miss this truly exciting event!

To all Christian Courier subscribers and advertisers:

The *Christian Courier* office will be closed for vacation from July 24 thru August 7. Our office will re-open Tuesday August 8.

Advertising deadlines are as follows:

Issue dated:	Advertising deadline (4 p.m.):
July 14	July 5
July 28	July 12
August 18	August 9
August 25	August 16

Only four issues will be published during July and August: July 14, 28, August 18 and 25

Vacation 1995

Your co-operation is appreciated. We wish you all a relaxing holiday.
Stan de Jong, Manager

Christian Courier will not publish July 7, 21, August 4 and 11

How to respond to violence

The killing of an Anglican priest and his wife in Montreal by three youths has, understandably, received much publicity. The* Anglican Journal *of May 1995 published several articles about the case. Among them was a personal expression of grief by the Primate of the Anglican Church, Michael Peers. In the second part of his article he wrote the following:

"The first response is blame. One group blames violence on television, another the leniency of the courts, another the breakdown of family patterns, another the inadequacy of juvenile psychiatric resources.

"All of this is completely understandable and some of it may even be helpful in the long run.

"But for me, that reaction does not really help. And I suspect that for the family, it doesn't help. We are all staring at the most ghastly signs of human depravity and injustice, and comments about society's problems do not come close to the real issue.

"It is not our minds that seek for help, nor our hearts, though both ache. In this tragedy I am confronted with horrors of the soul, and it is my soul that aches.

"I found that the only place to which I could turn was the cross of Jesus. He does not explain human violence — he looks at me from the cross, from the midst of it.

"When I need to know and feel that God still reigns (and I did need that as the story of the killings unfolded), I can only look at the cross. I do not fully understand the cross and I never will; but I know that it is the ultimate sign of God's unquenchable fire of love and justice, and I try, in that knowledge, to put one foot in front of another, to cope today and then tomorrow.

"Other things may help later, but I can only begin at the cross."

Church press

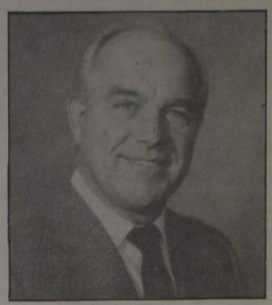
Jacob Kuntz

quotes

Pastoral house calls?

In the May issue of* Presbyterian Record *Rev. E. McKinley touched on the need for pastoral visits in congregations. He hears complaints that pastors do not make house calls anymore and he confesses to "an uncomfortable feeling that it is true."

"Pastoral visitation is being neglected in our churches when it is urgently needed," asserts McKinley.



"We live in a time of great stress and strain in our communities and churches. People leave the helping professions because of burn-out. Professional church workers desert the pastorate to escape the tensions of the work. Little wonder, psychiatrists, marriage counsellors and social workers are run off their feet dealing with the problems created by our anxiety-filled age. All this means there are more problems urgently requiring pastoral care than ever before. This critical need has been confirmed in my own experience as I visit in hospitals, senior citizen residences and private homes. These experiences have alerted me to the necessity of recovering the office of pastor in our churches. I believe many of the emotional problems in our congregations would be lessened, or even cured, were ministers to engage in the diligent and regular visitation of the people.

"The respect, encouragement and obedience promised by the members is contingent upon our faithfulness in carrying out the task of pastoral visitation in the homes of the people.

"Pastoral visitation is not without its benefit to the pastor. Not only will it do much good in the congregation, it will refresh your own soul and enliven your preaching. As you make your rounds, you will discover, as I have, the blessing you sought to bring to your flock is not fit to be compared with the deep satisfaction you receive in your own soul as a diligent pastor of the people of God."

"While the main burden of pastoral ministry must fall upon any minister called to be a pastor, it needs to be recognized that pastoral care is not the responsibility of the minister alone. Other people in the congregation need to be involved in this important work.

"But, in the end, the work of pastoral visitation depends on the diligence of the pastor. As Jesus the Good Shepherd is our perfect example, so pastors set the tone and example for others by visiting regularly from house to house."

United Church gets new hymnal

In 1971 the United Church replaced its old hymnal with a new one, the red* Hymn Book, *known popularly as the "Red Book." It was a joint project with the Anglican Church and has never been well liked by many people. Now the church will publish another hymnbook,* Voices United. *It will be available January 1996 and is meant only for the United Church.* The Observer *of April 1995 gave some interesting details of which we quote the following passages:

"By next January many United Church members will start picking up brand new burgundy hymnbooks instead of the old 1971 red hymnals.

"Getting down to the final 625 hymns for the new book has been the most difficult task for the 24-member committee.

"Some old favorites from the United Church's *Hymnary* (1930) have been brought back. When the 1971 red *Hymn Book* was produced jointly with the Anglican Church, compromises had to be made and some old United Church favorites were left out.

"But there will also be new hymns from the past 25 years, more hymns from around the world, and hymns in different languages.

"Probably the most difficult challenge the hymn and worship committee faced — apart from hymn selection — was language. Hardly, the committee's co-chair, says there's no doubt people will notice changes in traditional texts from the use of inclusive language. 'This won't please everyone. They'll miss fathers and men.'

"As well as hymns, the book will include psalms and service music. Achieving a balance to meet the needs of a diverse church was also a challenge facing the committee.

"Trying to narrow down the list of hymns was a difficult process which took two meetings of the committee, following many months of work by sub-committees and managing editor, Rev. John Ambrose, in evaluating possible selections.

"Ambrose says the project will now be turned over to the United Church Publishing House which will be marketing and selling the book at $22 a copy for a congregational words-and-music edition. Two other versions of *Voices United* — first a music leader's edition, then a melody-line-and-words edition — will be released later. A first run of 50,000 hymnals is planned.

"One of the concerns raised during the preparation of the hymnbook was its weight, in a church with many older members. Ambrose says at 975 pages, the book will weigh about the same as the red *Hymn Book*. With all the hymns, a comprehensive index, the psalms and other music, it was impossible to make it smaller.

"How *Voices United* will be accepted in the church is hard to forecast. There is a lot of interest and excitement in the new book."

Editor exits

For the last eight years Harold Jantz has been the capable editor of* ChristianWeek. *The paper started in 1987 and has grown steadily in circulation. In the April 25 issue Jantz announced that he will step down from the leadership of* ChristianWeek *at the end of 1995. In a publisher's note he had this to say:

"*ChristianWeek* grew out of the vision — shared by a number of others who participated in its birth — that the evangelical movement in Canada would benefit from a Christian newspaper that could report on the events, people, trends, issues, successes and failures, in short, how God was at work — within the church in Canada. In many ways it has fulfilled that hope. It has come to be accepted as the 'evangelical' newspaper for the country by many.

"Despite its still modest circulation, it has provided a very significant readership with a genuine 'window on Christian faith and life in Canada.' It has contributed to an awareness of one another and a sense of common cause. The expectation is that it will not only continue to do that, but increase and grow in its ability to serve the church in this country."

Jacob Kuntz is a retired Christian Reformed pastor who lives in Brampton, Ont., where he works part-time in Holland Christian Homes.

News

Symposium urges speaking, acting against injustice

Poverty demands spiritual response, commitment from Christians

Marian Van Til, with files from Ray Elgersma

WATERLOO, Ont. — The Mennonite Central Committee is celebrating 75 years of relief and development work this year. As part of its celebration MCC recently held a symposium to examine "directions for the future." In line with MCC's 75-year emphasis, the accent was on applying a biblical view of justice, including wholehearted compassion for the world's "little folk." The symposium was held at Conrad Grebel College in Waterloo, Ont., June 4-6.

The keynote speaker came from England. Dr. Vinay Samuel is director of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies. He asserted that global market factors have contributed to the world's becoming "a veil of tears." And Christians aren't exempt from such influence. It has "entered the marrow of Christians," Samuel said.

That's why he challenged his audience to "build communities where there will be hope for society's outcasts, the powerless, the poor; where prayer is a priority; and where relief and development efforts are based on genuine compassion rather than corporate marketing."

No room for 'me first'

Another Briton, Dr. Charles Elliott, a professor and dean at Cambridge University, warned non-government organizations such as MCC, CRWRC (Christian Reformed World Relief Committee) and World Vision not to be part of systems that transfer resources from the poor to the rich.

Elliott gave examples of political elites that ensure cheap food at the expense of poor farmers' incomes; of overvalued currency that deflates poor countries' markets for exports; of over-protection of local industries that mean higher prices paid by the poor; of government spending on services for the rich (e.g., roads, hospitals, schools) rather than the direct needs of the poor; of excessive military spending; and no credit for the poor.

Elliott urged his Christian audience to empower the poor, to speak against injustice and to engage their constituents to be vocal in their condemnation of oppression.

Gustavo Parajon, president of CEPAD in Nicaragua, talked of the hopelessness in his country, which has the largest external per capita debt in the world, and where 70 per cent of the people are unemployed.

To combat despair, said Parajon, we have been "given the Holy Spirit to be strengthened and encouraged." He urged his listeners to be "more proactive in our rather conservative political environments in the U.S. and Canada." We must speak to our governments and our people about the need to meet our commitments that we have made to provide just 0.7 per cent of [the Canadian] annual budget for foreign aid, Parajon pleaded. (Currently Canada is headed for a 0.25 per cent contribution.)

Variations on theme

Other speakers incorporated variations on those themes. Bryant Myers of World Vision International called for a return to the biblical view in which material and words are integral. "Poverty demands a *spiritual* response that is fundamentally relational": oppression of the poor by the rich means broken relationships; the poor are marred as imagebearers of God.

The Christian community is the most important and distinctive entity which can be brought to bear on this situation, said Myers, because we have the capacity to introduce morals and values; we can influence places of power; "we can and must promote justice." An integral part of spreading that Good News is the local church. Christian relief and development agencies must better utilize that resource.

For those concerned that they can't do much, one Mennonite participant countered with "drop in the bucket theology": "God places you in your position of responsibility...and you do the best you can, having received his leading and guidance." Those 'drops' soon make a cup of cold water which we can offer in Christ's name.

Montreal's street youth get a safe place

Bill Fledderus

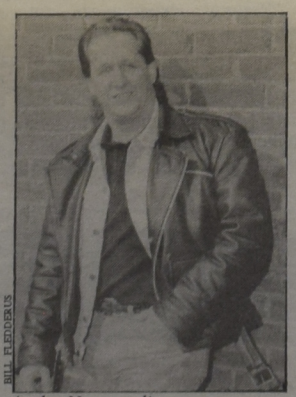
MONTREAL — "We want *Le Roc* to be a safe place for the thousands of kids in Montreal who have left their homes and have no safe place in their lives," says director Andre Normandin. He's talking about a newly renovated Christian drop-in centre which on June 2 swung open its doors to young people from the streets.

Statistics suggest there are between 3,000 and 5,000 youths on the streets of Montreal, and that the number doubles during the summer and triples on summer weekends.

The name of the centre and of the organization which runs it (the official name is *Le Roc — Aide aux Jeunes* or "The Rock — Helping Street Youth") is meant to suggest security, even to those who do not know it refers to Jesus Christ. The 13- to 23-year-olds who visit *Le Roc* will be able to buy nutritious food in the 60-seat cafeteria and wash their clothes at subsidized prices. They will also be able to try on and take donated clothing, listen to music, talk, and play games such as billiards, foosball and pingpong.

From abusive homes

There are many kinds of street kids, explains Normandin, whose team has been working among them since 1990. Workers from *Le Roc* keep files on many of the long-term street youth, but also on many who are recent runaways and still others who come and go depending on the ups and downs of their home environment. Normandin says most street kids come from rural or suburban areas outside Montreal.


BILL FLEDDERUS

Andre Normandin

About 85 per cent of street youth come from abusive or violent families and react strongly against any form of authority, says Normandin. To survive on the street they usually end up involved in prostitution, begging, theft, or selling drugs.

For those kids who are looking for help, *Le Roc* also houses a referral area where they can receive one-on-one guidance and become informed of the social services available to them. Workers will also accompany youth through various bureaucratic obstacles.

Faces of urban ministry

For the last 10 years Normandin and many of the people behind the project worked as the Quebec wing of Operation Mobilisation, an international evangelical mission organisation which has been active in Quebec since 1957. But earlier this year OM released the Quebec team from some of its institutional commitments to enable it to focus on street work.

Le Roc has a staff of 32 volunteers (both short- and long-term) from around the world, thanks to continuing good relations with OM which has offices in over 80 countries. Some of the staff are studying at the Urban Training School, which offers a two-year program in the theory and practice of street ministry.

Each summer about 100 volunteers come for several weeks to participate in Operation Ninevah, an annual introductory summer program organized by *Le Roc* in co-operation with *Jeunesse en Mission* ("Youth with a Mission") and OM.

Workers from *Le Roc*, a number of whom come from northwestern Europe, are also active in ministry to prostitutes and in publishing.

The *Le Roc* organization has been enabled to establish this new centre due to a variety of gifts and interest-fee loans, as well as a bank loan (not to mention small miracles to resolve difficulties with zoning, financing, and negotiations with the previous owner). The three-storey building, located one block from the Beaudry subway entrance and park where a number of street kids usually spend the night, was purchased on Feb. 23, 1995, for $320,000.

Volunteers and paid tradespeople have effected major renovations, including the construction of a chapel area, over the last three months. Efforts continue to collect furniture, recreational equipment and donations to support the volunteer ministry team, but already the centre will be open Thursdays and Fridays from 4 p.m. to 11 p.m.

"Street kids have a great need for a place to rest and talk," says Normandin. "If we opened all day long every day, we would probably not be able to handle the number of kids, so we are starting slowly, and we plan to increase the number of days as the summer progresses."

Dreams for the future

When asked about long-term goals, Normandin smiles ruefully. "Well, someday *Le Roc* would love to have a farm outside this downtown environment, a place where young people could really get away from the pressures and temptations of downtown Montreal. More realistically, I think in a few years we may be interested in being able to offer beds somewhere for kids to sleep."

"Right now, we don't expect to cure kids or to send them immediately back home into abusive situations. We want to meet their needs in a holistic way; give them hope, give them options and help to reverse the downward spiral that most of them get into."